
MLP

THE LOOM OF DESTINY

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NOTE

I AM indebted to the editor of Ainslee's Magazine *for the privilege of incorporating in this volume those stories which originally appeared in that publication under the title of* The Loom of Destiny.

A. J. S.

CONTENTS

PREMONITIONS

Then all the World seemed but a game,
A shadowy thing at Eventide,
Where thro' the Twilight children came,
And sowed and reaped, and lived and died.
Yes, bought and sold their lives away,
And when the old Nurse said good-night
Remembered in the Dusk that they
Must go to Bed without a Light.

ON the ragged skirts of the great city, where a steady stream of lorries and electric cars rumble over the Canal Bridge, stand twenty high-fenced, grimy acres of coal heaps.

All day long, year in and year out, the blackened and lumbering coal-carts ply back and forth between those high-fenced acres of bituminous blackness and the switching yard of the railway, stopping only at the weigh scales as they go.

As these loaded carts jolt over the stony road, a ragged band of cadaverous and hungry-eyed urchins, trailing behind them ludicrously improvised wheeled things, follow them like vultures, waiting to pounce down on any loose chunk of coal that may jolt unnoticed from the big cart.

At times, when the roads are not so bad as usual, they deliberately fling mud and stones at the drivers of the carts. When the drivers become angry at this, and hurl pieces of coal at them, they passively gather up the pieces and put them in their two-wheeled carts. If one of the band chances to be hit, the others fight for the piece while he limps away unnoticed. As they rush out, ankle deep in mud, it is a sort of standing joke and a time-honoured custom for the big drivers to cut at the half-bare legs of the ragged youngsters with their great keen, long-lashed whips.

The Child was one of this band, and he stood in the quiet rain watching for his chance. His pudgy face was scratched and bore a scar or two. He gazed out abstractedly from the edge of the broken sidewalk, oblivious of the rain that was soaking through his tattered dress. He could not have been much more than four years of age, and certainly not five. He had no cart, like his more opulent rivals. But, clutched in his chubby little dirt-stained hand, he held a

rusty, dinted-in tin pail. In the bottom of this tin pail were two or three miserable little shreds of coal and half a dozen wet chips. He knew well enough that he dare not go home with them.

On one foot he wore a toeless button shoe, on the other a man's rubber over-shoe, tied at the top with string. From a hole in this rubber shoe a small bare toe curled up impertinently. His ragged and mud-stained plaid skirt did not come quite to his knees, and his legs were bare, and chafed, and scratched. On the skirt, which he wore with supreme unconcern, remained three quite unnecessary buttons showing it must once have belonged to another — probably some departed or grown-up sister. But none of all these things seemed to trouble the Child.

He stood in the rain at the roadside, tranquilly watching with wide, childish eyes, the more agile fuel-hunters as they dodged in and out, swallow-like, among the passing lorries and electric cars, in quest of their alluring fragments of coal.

Occasionally his baby eyes stole furtively

toward a deserted cart, made of a soap-box and two wire-bound perambulator wheels. In the cart lay several pieces of coal, many of them weighing almost a pound.

Suddenly the jubilant owner dodged back to his cart with a great piece of coal, almost the size of the Child's head. The possessor of the tin pail eyed the cart-owner with a certain reverential awe. Such wealth seemed fabulous to him. As the coal king dropped his precious burden into the soap-box, a man driving past in a yellow dog-cart flung his cigar stub into the neighbouring gutter. The quick eye of the coal king saw the act, and again he dived out into the mud. He picked up the cigar stub with exultant fingers and carefully wiped it off on his trousers.

Then he took the one dirty match from his pocket and went behind a telegraph pole to light up.

In the meantime the Child's gaze was fastened hungrily on the piece of coal in the soap-box. A green light came into his wondering baby eyes. His childish brow puckered up into a defiant, ominous, anarchistic

frown. With twitching fingers he crept step by step nearer the soap-box and the precious coal chunk. The owner of the cart was still struggling with his cigar stub behind the telegraph pole. The Child put his hand tentatively on the soap-box, and let it rest there a moment with subtle nonchalance. Then he leaned over it. In another second his baby fingers had closed like talons on the coveted chunk of coal. Then he backed off, cautiously, slily, with his eyes ever on the threatening telegraph pole.

Before he could reach his tin pail on the sidewalk the coal king with the cigar stub looked up and saw the Child with the piece of coal. And he saw that it was his coal.

He descended on the fleeing Child like a whirlwind, swearing and screeching as he came.

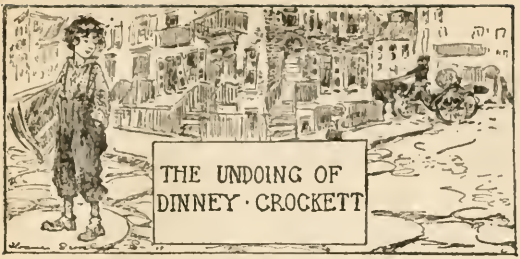
The Child clutched the chunk of precious wealth to his breast, and ran as he had never run before. But it was useless. The owner of the cart caught him easily in ten yards. He pushed the Child forward on his face, and kicked him two or three times in the

stomach. As he went down the Child still hugged the piece of coal. The owner of the stolen goods stooped down, and tried to force it from the little claw-like fingers. They held like steel. So the owner of the coal kicked the stubborn fingers a few times with his boot. Bleeding and discoloured, the baby claws at last limply unclosed and straightened numbly out. The owner took his coal, gave the Child a good-bye kick in the stomach, and went back to his soap-box.

As he passed the Child's tin pail he kicked it vigorously into the road. Then only did the Child utter a sound. He groaned weakly and sat up in the mud. He saw the coal king sitting on his soap-box, luxuriously, opulently, puffing at his cigar stub. The Child's heart, of a sudden, seemed to wither up with an inexpressible, ominous, helpless hate!

THE UNDOING OF DINNEY CROCKETT

Tho' they tykes us out of our gutter 'ome,
An' scrub till our 'ides is sore,
Their stinkin' suds won't myke of a bloke
W'ot 'e never was afore!



DINNEY was born lucky. No one knew this better than Dinney himself, who was, in a way, a sort of second Dr. Pangloss.

And, look at it from whatever standpoint you will, Dinney had many reasons to be happy. In the first place, he was as free as the wind, and answerable to no one but his own elastic conscience.

As for his wordly wants, he had plenty to eat, for he could live sumptuously on eight cents a day. Four cents were really enough, on a pinch, but Dinney found that he most always got a stomach-ache after a few days of four-cent diet.

In the second place, Dinney was never without a place to sleep. In fact, he had dozens of them. If it chanced to be winter,

he slumbered on the comfortable iron door over the hot-air shaft of the *World* building, where the heat blew out through the iron grating in a most delicious way. There, no matter how cold it was, he was as contented and as much at home as the most luxuriously cotted child on Fifth Avenue. And what was more, he was not afraid of the dark, and the night had no terrors for him. Dinney, like all self-respecting members of the profession, had an honest and outspoken contempt for fixed quarters of any sort, and openly scoffed at the Newsboys' Home. Another point to be remembered was that with sleeping apartments at the *World* building, Dinney was always on hand for the morning papers, which, as very few in the great city ever guessed, came up long before the sun itself.

In the summer, Dinney had the habit of going about and nosing out sleeping-places at his own sweet will. Often, it is true, he had to fight for them, but that fact only made him enjoy them all the more.

So, since Dinney could sell as many as

seventy papers of an afternoon, he envied no one, shot his craps, tossed his pennies, and enjoyed his quiet smoke with the rest of "de gang," and had no particular kick to register against the things that were.

But continuous sleeping in the open, the perpetual smoking of cigarettes and the vilest of cigar stubs, and the immoderate consumption of over-ripe fruit, stale sandwiches, and well-larded doughnuts, while perhaps pleasant enough in their way, do not tend either to promote growth or to produce remarkable roundness of feature. And for this reason all men misunderstood Dinney.

Yet probably that was why he was so very thin. His cheeks were sunken, his eyes were hollow, and there was a general air of wistful hungriness about his woeful little face. Dinney knew this well enough; in fact, he inwardly rejoiced over it, being wise enough to realise why he could sell seventy papers while his more prosperous-looking rivals scarcely got rid of their paltry two dozen.

Indeed, it was nothing else than this intangible soul-hunger shadowing Dinney's face

that one day caused a certain sad-eyed woman in a carriage to stop at the curb where Dinney was selling his papers, and blushingly thrust a quarter into his black and dirty hand.

Dinney's heart turned on its electrics at that. Such things meant something to him, for he was always too proud to beg, though not to steal. His big eyes lighted up in a truly marvellous way, and he, carried for a moment off his guard, grinned his genuine gratefulness.

That made the sad-eyed woman in the carriage turn to her husband and say :

" Did you notice, George ? He has really a bee-yew-tiful face ! "

They had been watching him for weeks.

" Yes, I suppose so," answered the man, with feigned disinterestedness, " if he 'd only wash it now and then."

" Do you know, George, as I pass him I often think he — he looks like poor little Albert."

The man called George had thought so, too, but did not say so. Instead, he looked up at the roofs of the buildings, for Albert

had been their only child, had died but a year before, and neither of them could quite forget it, as sometimes happens in this world.

Dinney did not forget that carriage, and it must be confessed that he made it a point to assume a most ridiculous and priggish expression of dejected meekness whenever it passed. He knew it would not make the sad-eyed woman any happier to feel that he had shot craps with every cent of her quarter!

But as time went on these little gifts grew more and more frequent, and, if kept up, would have been the ruin of the best newsboy in the Ward. The outcome of it all was that the sad-eyed woman came one day and drove off with Dinney in her carriage.

"George, do you know, I believe that child has consumption," she explained to her husband, who was really not a bit astonished at her act, "and I've brought him home, and I'm going to nurse him up for a while!"

George kissed her and called her a silly little woman, and said he supposed he'd have to let her have her own way. It was very lonely in that big house.

In fact, it was George himself who led Dinney up to the bathroom, showed him how to turn on the hot water, and significantly advised him not to be afraid of wasting the soap. In some unaccountable way George found it very pleasant to talk to a child again, and answer questions, and explain what everything was for. When he went downstairs he mildly and tentatively suggested that Dinney be taken out to their country house with them. He also determined, in his own mind, to see about buying Dinney a box of tools.

As for Dinney himself, that strange bathroom, with all its pipes and taps and shower controller and enamel tub, was a wonder and delight. For the fact must be confessed, it was Dinney's first premeditated bath.

He overflowed the bath tub, spotted the woodwork with soap suds, unscrewed one of the taps for investigative purposes, and had a most delightful time of it.

When a big, clean-shaven, stately-looking man in a bottle green suit with brass buttons stepped in, Dinney's heart jumped into his

mouth, as he thought for a moment that it was a policeman. It was only the butler with a new suit of clothes for him. Dinney eyed them with some curiosity, for it was his first acquisition of such a character. He ordered the butler to put them down on the towel rack, and did it in a tone of authority which the butler somewhat resented. Dinney's heart sank, however, when the man with the brass buttons, "at master's orders," carried away his ragged but beloved old suit, to be incinerated down in the furnace room. Before carrying out those orders, the butler viewed Dinney's tattered raiment with unconcealed disgust. He approached the bundle suspiciously, and carried it at arm's length, significantly holding his nose as he departed.

Dinney was quick to see the intended insult. A cake of wet soap hit the man with the brass buttons, hit him squarely on the back of the neck. The soap was followed by a volley of blasphemy that was, as the butler afterwards told the chambermaid, "fairly heart-renderin' and too awful for respectable people to talk on!"

When Dinney was led downstairs he was a very changed boy — that is, of course, changed in appearance. His sandy little crop of hair was on end, his face was shiny with much rubbing, and for the first time in history his person was odorous of toilet soap. What troubled him most was that his new pants were very prickly.

They were patiently waiting for him, and the sad-eyed woman took him on her knee and wept over him for a while. Dinney neither enjoyed nor understood that, but with him it was a law to look meek when in doubt. Yet he felt an indefinite unrest and restraint that was even more painful than the prickly torture of his new pants.

The sad-eyed woman took it for illness (Dinney was as tough as a pine knot!) and wept over him once more and asked how he would like to be her boy, her very own little boy for all the rest of his life.

That was a question Dinney had not thought over. But at that moment he heard the rattle of the dinner dishes and caught a whiff of the consommé being brought in, so

he, being *very* much in doubt, looked meeker than ever. He next noticed a silver dish on the sideboard piled high with big oranges. The oranges settled the matter. He was hers — hers for all time.

But he wriggled away, because he did not like being hugged. Such things were strange to him, he had never been taught to look for them, and his heart had never hungered for them. But he kept his eye on the dish of oranges. During all this George coughed once or twice, and said Dinney had the making of a fine boy in him, a very fine boy indeed!

So Dinney, who had beheld nothing but brick and stone all his life, was carried away into the country. Never before had he seen hot corn, the same as the Italians sold on the street corners, growing on long stalks. Nor had he ever before seen apples hanging on trees, or acres and acres of green grass, or flowers, millions and millions of flowers, all growing wild on the ground, like a lot of cobble-stones. It filled him with a silent wonder.

The little, sad-eyed woman and George talked over Dinney's future, and planned out his life for him, and nudged each other and nodded their heads significantly at each little sign from the child as he gazed out wide-eyed on a new world.

But at the end of the first day on the farm a change crept over Dinney. He did not romp laughing-eyed across the fields, nor did he gather hands full of flowers, as they had expected, or sit listening to the birds singing in the trees.

He hung disconsolately about the stables, with his hands in his pockets, asking the coachman endless questions about the polishing of harness and the breeding of horses. He caught and made captive a stray collie pup, and shut it up in one of the empty oat bins, and then chased the ducks for one busy hour. When stopped at this by the gardener, he fell out of an apple-tree or two, and then, wrapped in sudden thought, wondered what Gripsey was doing at home just at that moment. Then he fell to ruminating as to whether or not the evening papers were out,

and wistfully told the man called George all about "de gang," and the lives they lived and the things they did.

Then, being unable to fathom his indefinite and unknown unhappiness, he wailed aloud that he was hungry. The sad-eyed woman fed him until she feared he would burst, and said the air was doing him a world of good. Dinney had been used to eating whenever the spirit moved him, and it seemed to him a ridiculous custom to sit down and devour things at stated times, whether you were hungry or not.

But after his meal his melancholy returned to him. What with the prickliness of his new clothes and his secret desire to indulge in a quiet smoke, he suffered untold agonies.

In his loneliness and misery he disappeared stableward, and was not seen again until dinner-time.

The poor little sad-eyed woman was worried to distraction about him. When he shambled back to the house she called him over to her and took him up on her knee, and petted him as few mothers pet even their

own son. But it was all lost on Dinney. He squirmed and was unhappy.

"What is it, dear? Are you not well?" she asked, with a real and beautiful tenderness. Dinney was silent.

"Are you not happy here, dear?" the little woman asked once more, putting all the pent-up love of her childless life in one mother's kiss on the boy's flushed forehead.

It was too much! Dinney broke loose and sprang away like a young tiger.

"Gordammit! lee' me alone!" he screamed; "lee' me alone!" His face was contorted with a sort of blind fury. "I'm sick of all dis muggin', an' dis place, an — an every-t'ing else, and I want to go home, see! I want to go home — I want to go home!"

He wailed it out, over and over again, and the tears streamed down his face.

"But — but, Dinney, are n't you happy here?"

"No, I ain't," almost shrieked the child, in a passion of homesickness, "an' I'm tired o' dis bloody place, an' I want to go home — I want to go home!"

To his lifelong shame, Dinney broke down and bawled like any baby in arms.

The childless mother covered her eyes with her handkerchief and wept silently. The man called George walked nervously up and down the room, and then looked absently out over the fields of ripening wheat, golden in the sunlight of the late afternoon.

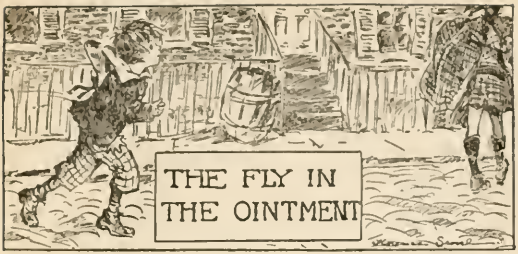
There was silence for several minutes, and then the man said, and it seemed almost resignedly :

" Very well, Dinney, if you really want to, I 'll take you back to the city with me in the morning."

Could it have been a sob that choked his voice? Dinney neither knew nor cared. He wiped his eyes and seemed to smell once more the smell of the crowded city street, and to hear the music of a thousand hurrying wheels.

THE FLY IN THE OINTMENT

They seen as we was gutter scum,
An' they said as we was bad;
An' they knowed th' soul of a gutter snipe
Was th' on'y soul we 'ad!



HE was by no means the worst boy in the ward, though the charge was often flung at him. Really bad boys lived all about him, but their ways were not his ways.

Such being so, there was great rejoicing and glee when he fell. It all came about by the merest accident. He had learned his Golden Text by heart, had his penny for collection in his pocket, and his Sunday-school lesson, about Joseph, at his finger tips. And it might never have happened but that at the corner of the street his quick ears caught a whiff of band music.

He stopped and listened. Yes, it was most unmistakably a band — no, two, three, four of them, all playing at once. The sullen, heavy Sunday-school look went out of

the boy's face. He forgot the discomfort of his Sunday clothes. It must be the soldiers on church parade! Then the sound grew like the voice of a thousand sirens singing in his ears.

Still he faltered. He remembered the Sunday-school collection, and his story of Joseph, and the cold, green eyes, haunting and relentless, that watched him each morning to see that he did not take more than his share of porridge. He was dreadfully afraid of those cold, green eyes. But the fates were against Duncan Stewart McDougall.

At that moment a new sound fell on his childish ears. It was the unfamiliar note of bagpipes, the mingled chant and drone of the band of Highland pipers. At that moment it was not the smell of the crowded slums that stole into his little Scottish nostrils. It was heather — the scent of heather, remembered as a dream of years ago.

The sound awoke something dormant, ancestral, unconquerable, in his McDougall veins. Then it was he remembered watching Sandy McPherson, the Holland's coach-

man, pipe-clay his leggings while he talked of the " Chur-r-rch Par-r-ade a' Sabbath week."

But still he faltered. He could not get the thought of those green eyes out of his mind. Then, all of a sudden, far up the street, he caught a glimpse of bonnets and kilts. Bonnets and kilts! And Scotland half a world away! It was a sight for sore eyes, if those same eyes had once seen the hills and valleys of the Highlands. After one furtive glance down his own little street, the carefully folded lesson leaf was flung into the gutter, and he was piking up the avenue as fast as his thin legs could carry him. He headed them off in six blocks, and fell in, panting and perspiring, with the Victoria Rifles Band. One or two of the soldiers kicked him surreptitiously, but he did not even know it. He was following the band! The blood that throbbed through his thin legs had never run so fast. He was drunk, dead drunk, with the music. Thrills went coursing up and down his backbone, and he seemed to be walking on air. How or why it was he could not understand; but on and

on he went. For seven enchanted miles he stuck to his band. His one sorrow was that his short legs could not keep in time with the music. But he could nearly almost do it, and by a sort of dot and carry one, he made a rhythm of his own in the marches. He pulled his peaked, puny little stooped shoulders back, and thrust out his narrow chest. He all but burst the one button from his threadbare coat with its neat patches at the elbows.

And all the while he marched, hobbled, stumbled on, drinking in the martial sound. An occasional policeman would try to kick him away, but he dodged in between the lines, where the soldiers came to look upon him as a joke. They poked him in the ribs with their white-gloved fists, in brutal good nature, but he did not feel it. He followed on ecstatically, with his stern little freckled Scottish face and his puckered-out chest, causing many a smile along the line of march.

That day he was not afraid to face the biggest policeman on the force. By this time there were big water blisters on his heels,

and one stocking was hanging down. But that military band was all he saw or heard When he got big like Sandy McPherson he was going to be a soldier. He was going to bayonet Indians and cannonade cities, and shoot people dead, right through their stomach and insides, and save the general's life at the end of the battle, and get sixteen gold medals, and then —

But the boy, of a sudden, started, paled, and wilted. The music withered out, the soldiers faded. The gleam left his eye, and the martial poise ebbed from his fallen shoulders. Peering at him from the curb, he saw a pair of cold, green, relentless eyes! The glory and the dream were gone!

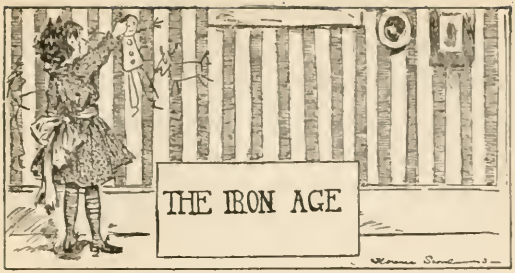
At the next street he fell away from the lines, cut across five side streets, hobbled home, and waited for the green eyes to come back. After that, he knew what would happen. The green eyes came. When the flogging was over he went up to bed without supper. He did n't care very much if it really was true that he was going to be a bad man and a drunkard as his father had

been. He supposed the green eyes ought to know. But before he fell asleep he showed the Baby, with the broom handle, how to bayonet Indians; whereat the Baby bawled, and she of the green eyes called up the little stairway. Trembling, the boy crept into bed. He felt sore all over.

Very late that night he heard the green eyes come in and take the penny from his pocket. She held the lamp to his face, but his eyes remained shut. Yet he felt those green eyes burning into him and withering his soul.

THE IRON AGE

They 'ad a pryer for our 'eathen 'earts
As they washed us down with suds,
An' thort as we 'ad a bran' new soul
W'en they 'd burnt our 'Ounds-Ditch duds.



PEGGY was certainly a tomboy. She openly scoffed at "The Pansy Stories" and "Little Wives" and "The Wide, Wide World," but strange to say, devoured all such books as "The Boys' Own Annual," "Deadwood Dick," "The Headless Horseman; or The Terror of Tamaraska Gulch," and any literature on Indians, dire adventure, and bloodshed which came into her hands.

And many tears were shed over poor Miss Peggy, and many were the solemn and supposedly impressive lectures read to her. But for all those lectures she continued to slide down the banisters, and openly whistle before company. In fact Miss Peggy did not approve of company, and was never happier than when staring the rector's nervous wife out of countenance.

Peggy took an unholy delight in tumbling on the hay in the stables, though Hawkins, the coachman, always was at pains to point out to her that 'orses could never heat 'ay as was trampled on, and artfully, but uselessly, insinuated that a species of horrible green snake abounded in the mows.

She killed mice and toads without a jot of fear, and could whittle with a jack-knife like a boy. When she cut her finger she tore a piece from the hem of her petticoat, bound up the wound, and went on with her work. She had climbed every tree in the garden, as one might easily know from the tell-tale holes always in her stockings. She also had a passion for scaling the grapevine arbour, against orders, because from the top she could look down into the next yard and make faces at the old gardener there, who was under dark suspicion of having poisoned a Shanghai rooster that had been Peggy's dearly beloved pet for one happy year.

Teddie, or rather Master Edward Branbury Bronson, who lived two doors distant, was her bosom friend and confidant, and poor

Teddie it was she slapped, and bullied, and berated, and ordered about in a way that was wonderful to behold. But Teddie's mother was warned by kindly and interested neighbours that the little boy ought not to come in contact with such a wild and unruly child as Peggy. So she straightway forbade the weeping and broken-hearted Teddie to speak to his old playmate, whose parents, she sighed, had utterly ruined the poor child's character.

But Peggy made a telephone of a ball of waxed string and two tomato tins, and after much climbing of walls and fences and ruining of skirts, it was duly stretched from garden to garden.

Over this telephone the parted lovers registered vows of constancy and carried on the most delightful and absorbing conversations. And Teddie might never have felt his exile had not the old gardener in the intervening yard discovered the string and innocently made use of it for tying up his currant bushes. For this unpardonable act the old gardener was accosted daily and vindictively with mysterious and unaccountable volleys of

stones from one side of the garden and green apples from the other. The stones, of course, came from Peggy's side. Miss Peggy never believed in doing things by halves.

Then followed three weeks of terrible loneliness, which might have ended either tragically or in an out-and-out elopement, had not the unstable Peggy purchased a brindled street pup for eight pennies, three silver spoons carried away from the table for purposes of exchange in general, and the gardener's wheelbarrow, whose disappearance, by the way, Hawkins could never account for.

But the brindled pup was currish and cowardly and mongrel to the backbone, and after being overfed and kicked and scuffed and dragged reluctantly about by Peggy for one week, he made his timely escape and was seen no more.

Then Peggy fell on evil days, and everything in some way went wrong with her. If she was locked up in the Blue Room she drew figures on the wall paper, and if she was sent to bed without dinner — for Peggy dined at

night — she would groan so loudly and so eloquently with stomach-aches that her father would end up by bringing her a load of good things, for which she would fall on his neck and kiss him a dozen times under his prickly old moustache and make him sit down on the bed and tell her about Custer's Last Stand, while she devoured the last bite and shook the crumbs out of the sheets and turned over and went to sleep quite contented and quite unpunished. More than once, therefore, poor Peggy's mamma wept long and bitterly at her child's unregenerate ways, while Peggy's father admitted she was a little she-devil, and ought to be shut up in a convent, or sent somewhere. Just where he did not know.

So when Peggy's Aunt Frances came to their house for a month or two she was looked upon as the god from the machine in the destiny of Peggy. Frances was just out of her teens, true as steel, and the one being whom Peggy looked up to in awe. This was, as she frankly admitted to Ali Baba, because her Aunt Frankie was beautiful, like

the angels in the church windows that always filled her with a mysterious veneration, and also because her Aunt Frankie liked Ali Baba. Ali Baba he had always been called, ever since he told Peggy the stories of the Forty Thieves, though his right name was Dr. Thomas Etherington, which did n't count with Peggy.

Now, Ali Baba had been wise in his generation and had realised that he must have Peggy as his friend at court.

When candies and boxes of flowers came to the house they were always for Miss Peggy. The candies she gorged herself upon, and the flowers she flung away, not knowing they were afterwards surreptitiously gathered up by her Aunt Frankie, for reasons poor little Peggy could never know and perhaps never understand.

To make sure of such a powerful ally, Ali Baba made open and uninterrupted love to Peggy, who in return daily soiled his collars, rumpled up his hair, went through his pockets, climbed on his shoulders, and in time even forgot to think of her long-lost Teddie.

The woman who secretly treasured Ali Baba's flowers was a wise little lady, and understood, of course, and said nothing.

But as time went on, one fine day she and her Ali Baba fell out, as all young people will. Peggy may or may not have been at the bottom of it, for the working of a woman's heart is an inscrutable mystery to man.

"Good-night — and good-bye," cried Ali Baba's sweetheart imperiously, through her tears. "I can — I can never see you again. Hereafter," with a pitiful little gulp, "hereafter our paths must part. And if you call I shall not be in — there!"

"Very well, dear, if you 're bound to be silly," said Ali Baba, cheerily. "But I 'm coming up to play with Peggy every day. Now if I loved you, Peggy, you would n't throw me over, would you, little one?"

A sudden pallor swept over the listening child's face. Poor little Peggy, she did n't know that the tenderness of tone in that question was meant for other ears. She clung to Ali Baba in a moment's passion of

affection. Then she slipped away from him, in shamed silence, as a woman might.

"And shan't we have fun though, eh, Peggy?" said Ali Baba.

Peggy looked at the other girl, and saw the unspoken misery on her face. Then Ali Baba caught her up in his big arms and she forgot again.

"Won't we, though! And Hawkins won't be here, and we'll play trolley cars in the brougham, and we'll unbury the dead cat and have another funeral, and you can throw green apples at the Browns' gardener."

"And we'll play hare and hounds," said Ali Baba, "and piggie-in-the-hole, and French and English, and — and all the rest! And you'll be my girl after this, my sure-enough girl, and never go back on me, and you'll wait for me, and we'll marry each other some day and be happy ever afterwards."

When Ali Baba went away, Peggy sat wrapped in thought for some time. A new world had opened up for her. She sighed.

"You don't really care, do you, Aunt Frankie?" she asked with great gravity.

The woman, who was gazing absently out of the window, shook her head, and seemed to swallow something that stuck in her throat.

"Teddie was such a baby, you know, Aunt Frankie! And you won't care if I don't ask you to come when we unbury the cat?"

Again the other shook her head, but this time with a smile.

"And you don't mind me being his sure-enough girl after this, do you?" Then there was a pause. "It 's just as well, you know, Aunt Frankie, because he often said he 'd wait and marry me if I truly wanted him to. And Ali Baba, dear old Ali Baba, is so nice." There was another long pause. "Aunt Frankie, don't you think it 's — it 's piggy of mamma to keep me in these hor'-ble short skirts?"

But the other went away without answering, and left the child still wrapped in thought.

When Ali Baba came as he had promised, Peggy's aunt had locked herself in her room, and Ali Baba accordingly did not play with

as light a heart as usual. And Peggy, too, was not the old Peggy. A most wonderful change had taken place. The holes in her stockings were all carefully mended, and Susette, Peggy's French maid, had been commanded to lay out an entire clean dress for her, a command unique in the régime of Susette.

The second day that Ali Baba came there was a still more mysterious change in Peggy. She carried her hands awkwardly. When Ali Baba kissed her there was a tingle in the touch — the first her childish lips had ever felt. She wore her hated new boots that squeaked, and Susette had been made to sew an extension on her meagre petticoat. For the first time in her life she had felt ashamed of her legs. Her hair was slicked down with water, and she was silent and ill at ease.

She did not try to climb up Ali Baba that day as if he were an apple-tree, and when he called her Peggy she told him with great gravity that Peggy was a baby's name, and that she wished he would call her Marjorie.

That day Peggy's mamma saw her walking sedately down the stairs, without so much

as touching the banister, and wondered if the poor child was ill again.

The next time Ali Baba came, Peggy sat waiting with her hands in her lap. She had stolen twelve of Susette's brass hairpins, and had done her frowsy little curls up in a ridiculous bob on the top of her head. Her heart was heavy, nevertheless, for she had found out for the first time that she had freckles — hundreds of them.

When Ali Baba came in he was in unusual good spirits, for he picked up Miss Peggy and impertinently kissed her on her little freckled nose and asked where her Aunt Frankie was.

Peggy resented that familiarity of address, whereupon Ali Baba kissed her again, and told her not to get priggish.

Peggy stamped her foot with rage. She would let Ali Baba know she was not a baby.

Ali Baba laughed and took her struggling in his arms, as he would hold an infant.

"I hate you, I hate you!" she cried hotly, as Ali Baba laughingly made his escape.

That night some one came down to dinner wearing a ring with one big shiny diamond in it, and an unusual pinkiness in her cheeks. Peggy did not understand its exact meaning, but she knew it must have come from Ali Baba. The thought filled her with a vague unrest, for Ali Baba scarcely spoke to her all dinner-time. She was silent and miserable as the meal went on. Her mother and father exchanged glances as they noted the change. Miss Peggy was at last learning to act more like a little lady at the table! But there was a mystery and constraint about that dinner that the child did not understand. She felt very lonesome. Ali Baba had forgotten the woman he had promised to marry if she would wait for him!

"When are you going to make your peace with Peggy?" she heard her Aunt Frankie laughingly ask Ali Baba.

"Oh, I'll have to do that when I'm her cross old uncle, shan't I, Peggy?" laughed back Ali Baba. "But Peggy is n't the same little girl I used to know. The Boogie man must have carried off my little Peggy!"

With one sickening flash the truth dawned on Peggy. Her uncle! Her uncle! Her heart jumped up into her throat, and in her agony she tore the lace Susette had sewn so carefully on her dress — sewn on for him! The first petal had fallen from the rose of her childhood.

"Why, Peggy, dear, what is it?" asked her mother in alarm.

Peggy did not and could not answer. A new and terrible sense of desertion and loneliness was eating at her heart. A blinding mist came before her eyes, and, to her unutterable shame, she wept — broke down and cried like a baby before Ali Baba and all the others.

She shook off the arm her mother had slipped about her, pushed over the cream pitcher, flung her own pink plate on the floor, turned from the table and fled from the room. She did not care where, so long as it was out of the house and out of his sight.

"How — how extraordinary!" gasped Ali Baba.

The butler was smiling behind his hand. Peggy saw it, and as she went past she kicked him vigorously and viciously on the shins.

"Poor Peggy," said the woman with the diamond ring, as she held Ali Baba's hand under the table. She understood.

Up in the hay-mow, to the consternation of the listening Hawkins, Peggy was crying as if her heart was broken for all time.

"Yes," the child's mother was saying over the coffee, "Peggy is just at the awkward age, is n't she?"

THE KING WHO LOST HIS CROWN

An' th' lydies cooed, "O th' ayngel things!
An' 'ow 'andsome in their cl'oes!"
But 'Arry, my eye, you knows 'ow far
In us *th' ayngel goes!*

IT was certainly the wonder of the neighbourhood. Its first appearance had been the one event of the year, and a flutter of excitement ran through the Street as its glories were dilated on from doorway to doorway down the little colony. Never, since the police had raided Ching Lung's laundry, had such excitement been known.

It was nothing but a shop sign, made up of white, or almost white, lettering, on a sky-blue background, and announced in characters of fitting size that Mrs. Doyle was a dealer in candies, home-made taffies, confectionery, tobacco, cigarettes, and sundries. The "sundries" was a mystery to most of the admirers of the sign, but they assumed it stood for something no less delicious than caramels.

For months the dingy little shop had stood empty. When Mrs. Doyle was found mysteriously occupying it one morning, its doors and windows were watched as only these things should be watched at such a time. A person can't be too careful about these new-comers.

The watchers saw a transformation take place. Boxes of highly coloured candies appeared in the show window, together with bags of molasses pop-corn, and square tins of brown taffy, and rows of chocolate mice with elastic tails. There also appeared a box of pink and green marbles, and a wire basket with seven wizened lemons in it.

The inhabitants of the Street viewed all these things with wonder and delight. At times during the day at least a dozen admiring noses were flattened inquisitively against the little panes of the candy shop window.

Naturally, then, when Master Thomas Doyle made his first appearance on the Street with the other children he was at once surrounded by an admiring and solicitous crowd, who, he was astonished to find, took

a most kindly and unexpected interest in him.

In fact many sly advances were made toward Tommie. He was given a broken top and a handful of marbles, and Jimmie Birkins asked if Tommie wanted to see their cat when it was being poisoned. It was felt to be a good thing to know a boy who lived in a candy shop. All of their advances Tommie Doyle received with fitting reserve and dignity.

When he was subtly questioned about the amount of candy and taffy he was allowed to devour each day, he curled his lip with careless contempt.

"Candy? Ugh! I'm sick and tired of candy, I am!"

Never in all time had such a thing been known before. A chorus of wondering "Oh's" went up from the astonished circle.

"All I've got to do," said Tommie, with a proper sense of his own importance, "is to pick up a pan and sit down and eat it. But I like chocolate mice the best. They're great, ain't they? I just had four or five

of 'em before I came out!" he added with a fine nonchalance.

The circle of listeners nudged one another knowingly, and shook their heads.

Their wondering admiration seemed to encourage the boy who lived in the candy shop. The glory of his position had never before dawned upon him.

"Why," he went on, "my ma says kind of cross, 'Tommie, you ain't had your 'lasses taffy to-day! You set right down and eat that pan before you go out and play!' And she gets real mad if she sees me tryin' to go out without eatin' a pan, or what 's left, so 's she can wash it up again."

The circle gasped. "When 're yer goin' to bring us out a pan?" a small boy at the back of the crowd piped up. They all pretended to be justly shocked at such forwardness.

"Why, any time at all, I guess, if you want some real bad. And some chocolate mice, too, eh?" said Tommie, pointing out the box of rodent delicacies.

A dozen mouths watered at the thought.

They fawned over him, and showed him how to play craps, though not for keeps. And as for Tommie, he was drunk with the consciousness of his strange new power. He walked with a sort of lordly independence among the children of the Street, for he saw he was already established in the position he felt he ought to occupy. He blushingly remembered that he had bawled for a day when the moving was first begun, but now he was a king. And he had not had to fight one single fight!

In fact, little gifts were urged upon Tommie, which he took with assumed reluctance, and tiny girls made hungry and melting eyes at him after feasting, in fancy, before that ever-alluring window. This was especially so in the case of Maggie Reilly, whose affairs of the heart had been both numerous and noted.

Often Tommie would come out of the shop smacking his lips with great relish, and say that he could still taste that last chocolate mouse. Day by day, too, he recounted the amount of taffy and chocolate mice his

mother made him consume, and told how she felt hurt if he did n't seem to enjoy his allowance. And week by week hope and hunger increased among the ranks of his army of worshippers. But neither candy nor taffy nor mice were forthcoming, and at last sounds of doubt and dissension arose. All day long a hungry-eyed group of children hung about the shop window and gazed upon the delicacies within, but never were they invited inside by the obdurate Tommie. Two glass jars, one of peppermints and one of red wintergreen drops, appeared in the window and added to the seductiveness of the forbidden paradise, and one week later these were followed by a pasteboard box filled with all-day-suckers.

Two days after the appearance of the box of all-day-suckers Maggie Reilly came into the possession of two pennies. It was believed by some that such wealth was not come by honestly, but this statement was frowned down, not for any faith in Maggie Reilly's honesty, but simply because curiosity conquered all other feelings

With these two pennies she invaded the sacred realms of Tommie Doyle's candy shop. After much debate it had been decided that she should be accompanied by Lou Birkins, her bosom friend. The little bell rang with an awe-inspiring clatter as the two fortunate ones entered the sacred portal. Once inside they gazed with wide eyes and open mouth on the strange treasures that lay before them.

In a way, the sight was disappointing. Mrs. Doyle was scrubbing the floor when they stumbled and shuffled in, but she wiped her hands and arms on her mat apron, and got up from her knees when she saw they were customers. She was a thin, gaunt woman with a shrill voice, and she frightened Maggie Reilly so much that that startled young lady did n't know whether she wanted wintergreen drops or chocolate mice. She finally solved the problem by taking conversation lozenges, six for a penny.

While these were being counted out the voice of Tommie Doyle came from the little room at the back of the shop.

" Ma, why can't I scrape out the big

pot?" The voice was tremulous with tearful entreaty.

"Because you can't, that's why, Tommie Doyle!" shrilly, sternly, called back his mother from the shop.

"But I ain't had a taste of taffy since we've come in this new shop!" wailed back the boy.

"And you ain't likely to get none, neither!" said his mother impassively, as she put the two pennies in an empty cigar-box placed on the shelf for that purpose.

The two visitors looked at each other with significant glances. The revelation had come! Tommie Doyle was a sham and an impostor. Conversation lozenges were forgotten, and the little bell over the shop door had not ceased ringing before the news was spreading like wildfire down the Street.

When Tommie Doyle stepped out of the shop that afternoon, smacking his lips and rubbing his stomach, a jeer of laughter sounded through the crowded street.

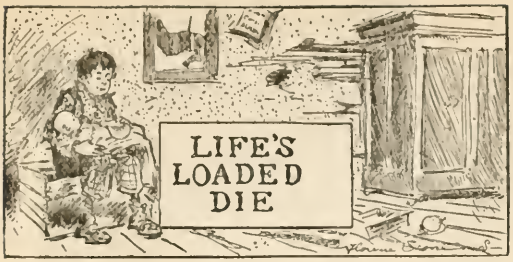
"Ma, why can't I scrape out the big pot?" mimicked Maggie Reilly with fiend-

ish delight, for she felt that her feelings had been outraged by Tommie in days gone by. A score of voices took up the cry, "Ma, why can't I scrape out the big pot?" and the taunt went echoing down the Street.

The boy who lived in the candy shop learned that day, in the deepest depths of his heart, that the way of the transgressor is hard!

LIFE'S LOADED DIE

For w'ot's bin bred in these 'ere bones,
In these 'ere bones was bred;
An' you an' me is gutter scum
Till you an' me is dead.



"BIFF a cop in de eye, if yer lookin' fer trouble, or t'row yerself under de cable, but don't youse ever give our Shanghai de stunt!" was a saying on the East Side long held to be oracular in its unchallenged wisdom. But the East Side in general and this same Shanghai Sharkey in particular had never heard a still older saying about giving a dog a bad name and then hanging it. The Shanghai Sharkey, like all small boys, had an honest and outspoken contempt for anything in the shape of proverb, parable, or text, which same smacked suspiciously of Sunday School and things hateful to the eyes of the urban ungodly, and were, therefore, religiously eschewed.

Yet it was the little germ of truth hidden in the core of that old platitude which made

this one boy just what he was. When Destiny flung the Shanghai Sharkey into the world she threw a loaded die on the board, for any New York boy born of the house and name of Sharkey must know that he has a name to live up to and a reputation to sustain.

Timmie did not claim direct relationship with the one and only Sharkey, but very early in life he found that the mere name itself was a standing challenge to fight all new-comers. If the Shanghai Sharkey came home three days in the week with black eyes and the nosebleed, his father, who was a longshoreman by profession and a gin-drinker by occupation, was in the habit of saying that it was not the kid's fault, proudly protesting that his son was a regular chip of the old block! Timmie's father himself had been somewhat of a boxer in his day, and even now, when his powers were in the sere and yellow leaf, he at times showed the weight of his brawny arm. This was true especially when his thin-faced, sickly wife, who sewed ten weary hours a day, refused to hand over the last

dime in the house, that he might cheer his drooping spirits with another drop or two of Holland gin. Timmie himself, in his infancy, it must be confessed, had been a silent and sickly baby, with his mother's meek grey eyes and an inordinate love for a certain tattered and bodiless old rag doll. It was this disappointment in his son and heir, Timmie's father stoutly protested, that had first driven him to drink.

But if Timmie's progenitor had at first beheld these things with undisguised anger and disgust, he vigorously undertook the child's reformation, almost, in fact, before he was weaned. The boy was taught, by the time he was able to walk, how to guard, feint, clinch, and break away. At the same time he was in the habit of showing him, in a way that made poor Timmie's mother weep for many an anxious hour, how a Sharkey should be able to stand punishment.

So by the time Timmie was old enough to venture into the open street he was master of his two childish fists, and what was more, he knew it. That knowledge is a

terrible and a dangerous thing in the mind of a boy.

It was on his very first day in the open that he won for himself the name of Shanghai, or rather, the Shanghai Sharkey, — a name which stuck to him through a thousand battles.

He was, it is said, thus aptly christened because of his ragged stockings and tattered shoes, which, in the activities of warfare, looked strangely like the feathered limbs of some uncouth Shanghai rooster.

When the victorious boy, very bloody and very white, was helped home after his first fight, his exultant father's joy knew no bounds. The child himself, in his pride, accordingly forgot about his bleeding lip, and wondered why his mother should sit by the window and cry. That night, when her husband was asleep, she stole out of bed and crept stealthily over to the child's little couch, listening anxiously in the darkness to hear if he was still breathing. Timmie, whose head was beating like a drum, was awake, and saw her, but said nothing.

Once honoured by such a name, the Shanghai Sharkey found he had, indeed, a reputation to live up to. Thereafter a new boy dared not venture into the remotest boundaries of the Ward, and expect to dwell therein, without first being duly challenged and fought by the Shanghai. This cost the challenger a tooth or two, numerous scars, and a periodically blackened eye, but many battles, in time, taught him not only how to endure, but even how to elude, the severe punishment which customarily comes with all such encounters. The result was that the new boy was usually defeated, while the victorious Timmie went home each time with less blood wiped from his nose by his ragged coat sleeve. Each engagement added one more to that ever swelling army of urchins who came to look upon the Shanghai Sharkey and his prowess with admiring and reverential eyes. And Timmie's father hit him enthusiastically on the back and said with pride that he was a bloody little devil.

So in time it came about that there was not a boy on the East Side who did not fear

and envy this lion-hearted and tiger-toothed hero of a hundred fights. Nor was there a girl within twelve squares of the Sharkey residence (and strangely unpretentious was that residence for such an eminent inhabitant!) who did not furtively cast shy glances at the Shanghai. To be the "steady" of one by the name of Sharkey was something for future generations eternally to dream of, and talk over, and wonder at!

Notwithstanding these seductive advances, the Shanghai Sharkey, as a fighting man, publicly and with fitting dignity, proclaimed that it was not for him to waste his time and goodly strength on women folks. Far from it. At his father's solicitation he beguiled Mike Donovan, who kept the "Lincoln Saloon" on the next corner, to give him certain private tips on left hooks and advancing, — points on which even Timmie's father confessed a latter-day ignorance. Mike Donovan had been a boxer of repute in his youth, and even at the present time three stoop-shouldered young men, wearing gold eye-glasses, came to him twice a week and

were regularly sent home with puffed cheeks and watery eyes. The Shanghai Sharkey, for his lessons in the manly art, entered into a contract which ordained that once a day he should polish the brass window rods of his tutor's saloon.

But in this world every rose has its thorn, and every Klondike its Chilkoot. The Shanghai Sharkey, for all his conquests, with all his admirers, and all his fame, was far from being inwardly happy. He was an impostor. In the bottom of his own heart he knew he was a sham and a deception. He was not the thing he pretended to be, and the irony of it all weighed heavily on his heart.

The skeleton in the Shanghai Sharkey's closet was nothing more nor less than a Baby. Over this Baby his spirit brooded with a tenderness that was almost maternal. As a fighting man he knew well enough he should be above all such things! But try as he might, he could not help entertaining a secret and passionate love for this same little shred of humanity, which came unexpectedly into his home one memorable day. As a Sharkey it

was both wrong and inconsistent, and a weakness to be overcome, in some way, and heroically lived down. Babies were for women folks to bother about, and were meant mostly for boys to kick. But the loaded die had ordained that Timmie, the man of blood, should, in truth, have the heart of a girl, and that having such, he should lead for all time a double life.

The same hand that had knocked out Dinney Crockett one day might be discovered the next holding, with great care and tenderness, a little oval-shaped bottle from which a hungry infant could be seen feeding. Or at night the Shanghai Sharkey might be found patiently rocking an uncouth looking little cradle, and humming a slumber croon of his own invention to the Baby. The cradle in question, Timmie himself had made of a sugar barrel and a stolen fence-board. But the worst of it all was, that to do such, was the joy of Timmie's life.

Day after day the Baby's mother lay on her bed, counting the figures on the dirty wall-paper, and nervously clutching at the

threads in the worn counterpane. Timmie did not mind not being able to go out, and it did not take him long to learn how to warm the milk. But now and then some stray street-cry would enter the quiet little room, and he would remember his old battles, and the thought of them would fill him with a sickening horror.

Still, in some way, his barbaric little heart warmed to his work, and he did his best to forget, and in time he grew to love the little squalling piece of ever-hungry flesh and blood with a love that was wonderful and beautiful to behold.

It was only natural, then, that following the birth of the Baby there was less bloodshed in the Ward than the oldest inhabitant or even the most vigilant policeman could remember.

But one week after Timmie had completed his wonderful cradle, his father came home, exhaling the odour of gin, and kicked the cradle out into the street. When Timmie's mother, who lay sobbing on her bed, wailed that she had no more money to give him, he

prepared to kick the woman into the street after the cradle.

"Money, damn you; I must 'ave money!" roared the man, mad drunk. He had been born within sound of Bow Bells, and under drink or sudden passion his Cockney accent and his hunger to kick women came back to him.

"'Old off, you bloody young whelp!" he cried the next minute, for Timmie had seen the act and had flung himself on his father, tooth and nail. "'Old off, I say, or I'll kick your bloody young guts out!"

The man shook the boy off as a bull-dog would shake a pup, roughly, but not unkindly.

"Money! you bawlin' 'ound, money, I say, or I'll —"

Timmie knew his mother was going to be murdered. This time he fought with neither his fists nor his feet. With vice-like arms he clutched his father about the knees, and sank his teeth into the fleshy part of the huge leg he held, till the blood spurted out on the blue-jean overalls, and the taste of it on his lips turned him sick.

The man leaped away with a howl of anguish, recovered himself, and aimed one deadly kick at the boy. The Shanghai Sharkey dodged the great heavy boot like a cat, burst open the door, and screamed again and again for help.

In two minutes a hundred strange feet were tramping about the little house, though it was an hour and more before the hospital ambulance drove up and carried the woman away.

In a moment of consciousness, as they were carrying her out, her feeble eyes caught sight of the police patrol. Then it was she swore to them, over and over again, that it was not her husband who had done it.

Thereafter followed dark and troublous days for the Shanghai Sharkey. Man, at his birth, is the most helpless of all animals, and this fact Timmie learned, in the bitterness of his heart, when he found himself the sole guardian and protector of a motherless baby.

Seldom was he seen upon the streets, and when it did so happen it was always noted

that he skulked hurriedly homewards with some strange parcel under his arm. Mysterious washings, too, appeared by night on the Sharkey clothes-line, and endless were the speculations as to just what hand wielded the soap-bar in that depleted household.

As for the Shanghai Sharkey himself, he often all but shuddered as he wondered what the "gang" would think if they ever knew he had turned into a house nurse. For with his own hands he fed and washed and dressed the Baby, and with his own hands he created for it a beautiful perambulator, to take the place of the lost cradle. This perambulator he made of two very wobbly tricycle wheels, purchased from Snapsie Doogan with a broken jack-knife and a paper windmill, while a box that bore the imprint of "Foxbury Rye," the latter being the special gift of Mike Donovan, did duty as body for the carriage.

It was three weeks after his mother had been taken to the hospital, one sunny day, when Timmie was sneaking shamefacedly homeward with a bottle of fresh milk for the

Baby hidden under his coat, that he came face to face with Maggie Reilly. That young lady, who for months past had made seductive but ineffectual eyes at the Shanghai Sharkey, was almost bursting with importance, for she had just come from the hospital and was the bearer of great news.

"She ain't a-goin' to die!" said Maggie, gazing at the boy with a yearning that would have melted a heart less adamantine. That was all she said, but Timmie understood. Maggie half regretted this less tragic turn of events, for she had hoped a death in the family might humble the pride of the Shanghai Sharkey and turn his mind to tender thoughts.

Two days later Mrs. Reilly herself called on the abashed Timmie, who was almost caught in the very act of feeding the Baby from a bottle.

"Egschuse me, *Mister* Sharkey," she said in a tone that cut the boy to the bone, so withering was its sarcasm, carefully holding up her ancient skirts while she spoke, "but Oi've jist seen yure muther, and she 's sint down worrud be me fur yez to bring up the

Baby in the marnin', shure! Ah, poor sowl! Indade but she hungers for the soight of him!" Mrs. Reilly watched every word strike home. "Will yez do it?" she asked.

"'Course," said Timmie, doggedly.

Mrs. Reilly did not add that the kindly suggestion had been her own. She saw, with much gratification, the pallor that overspread Timmie's face, and she inwardly rejoiced at that pallor, for in days gone by the Shanghai Sharkey had closed both the eyes of her little Patrick, and sent him home with bleeding mouth and broken spirit, to the undying humiliation of the house of Reilly.

So Mrs. Reilly pointed out, with quite unnecessary care and precision, just how such a journey would be watched with delight by every man, woman, and child in the Ward, and gracefully withdrew, after pointedly expressing the hope that *he* would n't put down a poor, dear baby to fight with any undecent blackguard as would stop to laugh at a boy who was only doing his bounden duty.

Then, as she swept out, she noticed the

sudden look of fierce rebellion that mounted the boy's face, and discreetly stopped in the doorway a minute or two to enlarge on the blessedness of filial duty, and hoped "as he was n't a boy as would n't listen to his muther's dyin' wish — or, leastways, *almost* dyin' wish!"

The Shanghai Sharkey, after that scene, spent a sleepless night. In the throes of that midnight struggle he learned for the first time that the biggest battles of this life are not fought with fists. That knowledge is never good for a pugilist.

In the morning, when he was feeding the Baby, he sighed heavily once or twice. It was a hard world. But in his eyes there was a new light.

With that new light in his eyes and with set jaws, he slowly and deliberately arranged two pillows in the little baby-carriage he had so lovingly made, and over them spread a blanket. With a tenderness quite new to him, and a deftness strange to his gnarled and stubby little fingers, he lifted the Baby into the outlandish cart, and carefully fixed a

blanket over him. At first he was tempted to cover him, head and all, in case he might cry. But that, he saw, was a compromise, and he decided otherwise.

Then he opened the door and took one last look at the dingy room, and the walls that had hidden so long his life's disgrace. Once more he sighed!

In another moment the Rubicon was crossed, and the uncouth little baby-carriage was on the sidewalk.

Outside, buildings and street seemed to reel and stagger drunkenly together. For, as he had expected, Mrs. Reilly had not been idle. Somewhere or other he had once heard that he who lives by the sword must die by the sword. As a fighting man he asked no favours. She was his enemy, and if she had got within his guard, why, it was only a part of the game, after all! But it was a hard game.

A thousand curious eyes, it seemed, were staring impertinently at him. Every door along the street was open and filled with waiting faces. On each face was a sinister,

pitiless, exultant grin. Godiva riding naked through the streets of Canterbury was happier than Timmie Sharkey that day.

Eyes that had once looked up at him with only awe and undisguised veneration, now gaped at him with mocking laughter and noses he had once triumphantly punched were now turned up at him. Derisive, goat-like cries came from every fence-corner. Even a tin can or two was flung at him, and at each fresh assault screams of delight echoed down the street.

A mimic wailing, as of a thousand suffering babes, came from upper windows and doorsteps. But not once did the Shanghai Sharkey stop. A woman flung a dipper of dirty water at him from a fire escape, and someone threw a watermelon rind, which struck one wheel of the carriage.

Growing bolder with each unnoticed sally, the band of merciless tormentors at last joined in line behind the baby-carriage, and sent volley after volley of coarse raillery at the boy.

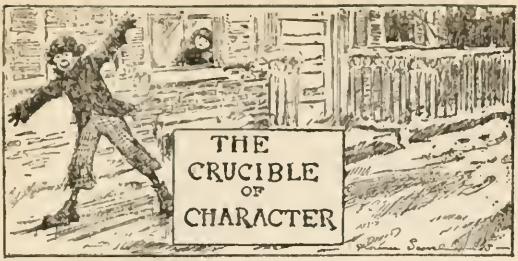
Then Pat Reilly openly and ostentatiously

flung an old boot at him. The missile smote him heavily in the back and the crowd held its breath. But from the Shanghai Sharkey came neither response nor retaliation.

With that unanswered challenge, both he himself and the entire East Side realised one thing —

The Shanghai Sharkey had fallen — fallen for all time.

They 'orled us up from our sewer 'ome,
An' wept at our dirty wyes.
" They 're 'uman, as us, O Gawd, be 'old,
An' open their darkened eyes !"



OF all his friends Russell Wentworth Russell liked Snapsie Doogan the best.

The reasons for this were many. Snapsie belonged to a world far distant from his own, and told him of weird and wonderful things that took place in Foreign Parts, vaguely but alluringly known as the Ward.

Then, again, there was no one to order Snapsie's going out or his coming in, and this alone almost deified Snapsie in his eyes. To Russell Wentworth Russell, who had a governess and a French maid, to say nothing of a mamma who was always telling him not to do things, such undreamed of liberty as Snapsie's seemed incredible and god-like.

As for Snapsie, he had neither maid, governess, nor mother, but gloated unnecessarily

over his good luck. On several occasions, however, he had plainly and openly hinted that he should very much like Russell to take him and show him these three mysterious personages of his household, especially the French maid at meal-time, for he had somewhere heard that French people always ate live and wriggling frogs.

But this privilege was obviously impossible, as Russell's mamma had forbidden him to play with street boys, and once even had ordered the butler to chase Snapsie off the front steps.

Snapsie, thus outraged, wreaked a satisfactory but at the same time underhand revenge, by making a slide on the snowy asphalt, directly in front of Russell's house. Up and down this beautiful slide he careened for two boisterous hours, with much studied gusto and many a sign of delirious joy, knowing full well that Russell was watching him from the nursery window with tearful and covetous eyes.

But what seemed the most enviable and beautiful thing about Snapsie and his life was

the fact that he could eat whatever and whenever he liked. No matter what time of day it was, all he had to do was to sit down and eat! With Russell it was very different, for it was part of Russell's mamma's daily occupation to examine him for symptoms of inherited gastritis.

Ever since Russell had had bilious fever — and the much-abused Russell knew in his heart of hearts that it had been brought on merely by an inordinate stuffing of cold suet pudding, given to him secretly by Nora, the chambermaid, in the cook's absence — candy and taffy, tarts and doughnuts, and all such things, indeed, that go to make life bearable for the Youthful, had been denied him. Even peanuts were tabooed, and after each meal he was made to swallow a pepsin tablet.

And many a time, accordingly, did his mouth water during his clandestine meetings with Snapsie, and he would eagerly watch the boy from the Ward struggling with a deliciously sticky all-day-sucker or a pink-tinted bull 's-eye. Snapsie, by the way, made it a

point always to save his little delicacies until such meetings, since he had discovered that the hungry eyes of another boy could give to his sugary prize an extraneous and quite intangible sweetness.

It was one afternoon when Russell had stolen out through the coach-house to a vacant lot they had appointed as a rendezvous, and was helping Snapsie make a bonfire of a piece of cheese-box and an apple barrel, that he, watching the Ward boy rapturously making away with his third cocoanut caramel, asked him if *he* ever got the stomach-ache?

"Naw!" said Snapsie, wiping his mouth with his coat sleeve, "on'y onct — las' Chris'mus!"

"At Christmas!" said Russell. "It must have been fun."

"Well, I guess! There was a blokie wid a jag on took me into a swell hash-house and says, 'Now, little lean guts, order any-t'ing yer wants.' Did n't I order up de grub, though!"

Snapsie 's eyes saddened with the memory of it all.

"What — what did you take?" asked Russell, hungrily.

"W'y," I says to de chief grub-slinger, "look 'ere, waiter, gimme one cow-juice wid an overcoat, an' den youse can trow on a pair of de white wings wid de sunny side up, an' den a slice or two for a gazabo, an' some mixed Irish arter dat, an' den a Santiago cake-walk, w'ich, of course, is a Spanish Ommerlet. Did I eat? Oh, no, I did n't do a t'ing to dat meal, I did n't! Den I finished 'er up wid some Chinese white weddin' an' a French roll wid black dirt on it!"

"Black dirt, Snapsie?" said Russell, dubiously.

"Yep, o' course it was black dirt! Dat means choc'lut."

"Oh, chocolate," said Russell, brightening, for he had understood none of Snapsie's graphically enumerated dishes, though he had vaguely felt their deliciousness, by the way in which the other boy worked his mouth and rolled his eyes. "Why, *we* often have chocolate at home."

"Youse? Well, w'y don't youse bring us some out, now and den?"

"Why, I — I never thought of that! Besides, my mamma does n't let me eat things, you know."

"Oh, dat 's nuthin'; w'y don't youse pinch some?" Snapsie queried, in the most matter-of-fact manner.

Why did n't he pinch some? Why did n't he, indeed? It seemed strange that he had never thought of that before. Other boys ate chocolate. Even Snapsie had it as often as he liked. Why should n't he pinch some? Snapsie, upon inquiry, stated that it was great fun to pinch stuff.

Russell Wentworth Russell found that the thought of his unjust treatment was a wonderful salve to his rebellious conscience. To his unelastic little code of fitting things, the idea of stealing was nauseatingly new. But he was never let have anything he wanted. Why should n't he eat stuff between meals, the same as other boys? Why was he made such a baby of, and treated like a girl? He succeeded in making himself quite miserable,

and had worked himself up into a satisfying passion of revolt by the time he stole home by way of the coach-house.

He went in through the back door. He dared to do this in the face of tradition in order that he might pass through the kitchen, off which opened the pantry. It was in the pantry, he knew, that the chocolate was kept.

To the boy this same pantry had always seemed a place of mysterious twilight, enchanted and fragrant as it was with the odour of strange spices and the haunting perfumes of many kinds of fruit. In it, he knew, were kept raisins and currants, and bottles of vanilla, and orange peel, and wine biscuits, and angel food, and sponge cake, and everything, in fact, that would go to make it a place of paradisal mystery to the heart of the average small boy. At the end of the pantry, too, was a high, small window with a wide ledge, on which custards were always put to cool and jellies were left to form in the moulds. There was also a row of spice-boxes, all duly labelled and ranged beside canisters of tea and sugar and coffee. What was on the

higher shelves was a secret that only the cook and the gods themselves could tell.

From his earliest day, before the régime of the reigning cook, Russell Wentworth Russell could remember the one particular red canister in which the chocolate was always kept. Often he had seen the old cook take out the beautiful, dark-brown squares done up in glittering tin-foil that all his life had seemed so delicious to him, especially on cake.

The old cook, Russell remembered, had been much nicer than Nora, the new one. Before the advent of Nora he had been allowed to stand in the kitchen and gaze wonderingly at the lurid heat of the range, and watch the sizzling roasts being lifted smoking hot from the pan to the big platter, which had queer little runnels in it for the gravy. And he once used to watch, with delight, the sponge cake being pierced with a thin whisp from the broom, to see if it was done in the centre, and get the burnt part when it was cut off. The splutter and bubble of the hot grease when water was

poured on it from the kettle, to make gravy, had always been a sound he took special pleasure in, and sometimes he even had the good luck to see the live crabs meet their sickening yet fascinating death by scalding. Sometimes, too, he used to get the dish with the sugar frosting to scrape out. Sugar frosting, he remembered, was delicious!

But Nora, the new cook, was so different! She was very cross, and said the kitchen was no place "fur childer." Her Irish arms were red and big and strong, and her shoulders were broad, and she had a way of slamming to the oven door that always made Russell very much afraid of her. Her mere firm stride and the quick, war-like way in which she would approach and retreat from the hot range with one red arm guarding her face, soon made Russell afraid of her, even before she had felt enough at home in her new place to tell him in so many words that he had no business to an occasional handful of raisins out of her colander.

His mother herself now entered that throne-room of domesticity with a certain

timidity, so strong-willed and outspoken was its monarch on the question of foreign intrusion.

So when Russell heard the step of the cook coming up from the laundry, he flushed guiltily and fled upstairs, by way of the back hall, tingling with fear. At the top of the stairs he listened for several moments, then tiptoed up to the nursery, where for an hour he brooded alone with some indefinite sense of shame. The baby curl went out of his lips and his eyes hardened, for it was his first passion of illicit possession. He tried to remember just how chocolate tasted, and brought to mind the last time he had eaten it as frosting on cake. It was about the sweetest thing, he thought, that he had ever tasted. But then they put such a little bit of frosting on cakes, and never, never was he allowed a second piece. The injustice of it all filled him with a weak, indeterminate rage.

When Weston, the maid, came to take him out for his walk he hotly protested that he had a headache, and would not go. He wanted to be alone. This unexpected revolt

brought his flurried mamma on the scene, who set down his flushed face and his restless movements as incipient scarlatina, and made him hold a clinic thermometer in his mouth to see if he had a temperature. How he loathed and abhorred that thermometer! Then his mother took him on her knee and was about to give him one of his much-beloved "petting-ups," when he broke stubbornly away and fled to the furnace-room.

The result of such extraordinary conduct was that he was straightway put to bed, and kept there through one long, tearful day. It was only after a passionate outburst and a refusal to eat his breakfast that he was allowed to get up on the second morning.

All that day, making a plea of his so-called illness, he hung about the back of the house, listening always for the footsteps of the cook. They seemed never to leave the kitchen. Then he fell to wondering how much chocolate there might possibly be in the red canister.

He could not decide whether to eat it all himself, or share it with Snapsie. He

thought he ought to share it with Snapsie. The consciousness of having a comrade in the deed was strangely consoling.

But never had the house seemed so full of sounds. At each little noise he started, and his breath came quicker.

Then he heard the voices of Weston and the cook talking together, and later he heard the sound of their feet on the laundry stairs.

He crept half-way down his own stairs, step by step, and then stopped to listen once more. A sudden, terrible silence seemed to hang over the back of the house.

Then, on his toes, he slunk cautiously down to the kitchen. It was quite empty. Then he stole across the bare floor and quietly turned the handle of the pantry door. It creaked startlingly. He waited a minute to listen. Hearing no sound, he swung the door open and stepped into the chamber of mysteries. There, before him, stood the red canister, emblazoned with letters of shining gold. He felt the lid, fearfully. A sudden trembling seized his knees, and his small, talon-like fingers shook visibly as he

reached down to the bottom of the cannister and clutched one of the large squares of silver-papered chocolate. There were other pieces in the cannister, but he did not stop to take them all, as had been his first intention. The sound of feet on the laundry stairs reached his ears and he turned and fled.

At the top of the stairs he slackened his pace, and leaned panting over the banister. No one was following him. Then with slow and cautious steps and eyes watchful, like an animal's, he crept on, from door to door, to the nursery.

There he sat down, wiping the cold perspiration from his face with his coat sleeve. Then he got up and walked to the window. The room seemed suffocatingly hot to him. He noticed he had left the door open. After peering a silent moment or two down the hall he quickly closed the door, and would have locked it, but there was no key.

With trembling fingers he drew the cake of chocolate from under his blouse. He had broken it, in his flight, and to his horror, three or four loose bits fell on the floor.

These he quickly gathered up, carefully brushing away the tell-tale marks with his sleeve.

He looked at his prize several moments without moving. It seemed, of a sudden, to have lost its value, and he doubted if, after all, chocolate was so nice as he had thought. One of the pieces he nibbled at timidly. The taste was crushingly disappointing, for it was unsweetened. It had all been a mistake. Almost nauseated, he spat the sickly taste of the stuff from his mouth.

Then slowly, terribly, it crept over him that he could never eat this thing he had stolen. Neither could he give it back. Nor could he carry it about with him. Someone might come in at any time, — at that very moment, and catch him with it. He wished he had never done it!

He guiltily stole downstairs, and across the little back yard out to the stables. Watching his chance, he climbed into the hay-loft unobserved, and buried the odious pieces of stolen things deep, deep down in the hay in one corner of the loft.

He was gazing drearily, but with tacit watchfulness, from the nursery window when he heard the voice of the cook, talking to his mother. His heart stopped beating. The cook was saying that someone had stolen the chocolate, this time a whole cake! The boy sidled close to the nursery door that he might hear the better. The cook said she believed it was that drunken James. Then his mother said such a thing was ridiculous, and that it was n't really worth worrying over, and that she had better use cocoanut this time.

There were great and unknown guests that night for dinner, and that meant that Russell Wentworth Russell had his meal alone in the nursery. For the first time in his life he was glad of it. But so silent and dejected and miserable was he throughout his meal that the mystified Weston went downstairs, and came mysteriously back with a delicacy she knew would be a delightful surprise.

Holding her hands laughingly behind her, she came close to him and thrust it suddenly upon his plate.

It was a huge piece of chocolate cake.

The boy shrank back as though Weston had struck him with her hand. He flushed hot and cold, and cowered, vaguely feeling that Weston knew everything and was playing a cruel joke on him.

But there was nothing but kindly surprise in Weston's eyes.

"Why, Russell, dear, it's chocolate!"

Russell neither spoke nor raised his eyes. There was a choking lump in his throat, and to hide a sudden gush of tears he slipped away from the table and went sullenly up to his bedroom.

That night there was no sleep for Russell Wentworth Russell. For three long hours he turned and twisted in his brass cot, with the awful secret eating his heart out. He was a thief, a thief, a thief! The darkness seemed to scream it at him, and the laughing night seemed to know. In a rage of grief he smote his pillow with his arms and groaned under his breath, until he could stand it no longer. Somebody, somebody *must* be told.

He sat up in bed. He would go straight to his mother and tell her everything.

No, that would not do. He was not really afraid of his mother, — it was the unknown and awful cook. But, then, that would make it *even*. He would go right to the cook and tell *her*. He wondered what she would do. The thought of facing her filled him with a sick fear, and he lay back weakly on his bed. No, he dare not tell her.

But the Thief! Thief! Thief! started to ring again in his ears, and his soul writhed at the sound. He must do it. He closed his eyes and counted ten. Then, with one tearful gulp, he slipped out of bed. He went to the door and listened. It was terribly still and dark. Holding up his nightgown, he stole down the long hall, desperately facing the darkness. Shadows and little night sounds, that at other times would have shaken his childish frame with thrills of terror, he slipped past without even seeing or hearing.

At last he came to the cook's door. Once, twice, three times he knocked timidly on it. There was no answer. Then he pushed

it open and walked courageously in. The cook was sleeping soundly. He shook her arm. She did not move. He shook it again, this time desperately. With a startled cry the cook opened her eyes, and sat up in bed.

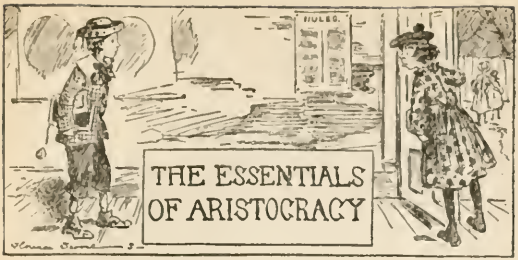
"Why, Masther Russell, what is it?" she cried, peering through the dim light that came in at the window. She could see that the boy's face was as white as his nightgown. As he did not answer she asked him again. There was a note of kindliness in her voice at the second query, for she also saw that he was shivering, and his face was drawn and tear-stained.

Twice he tried to speak and could not. The choking lump in his throat seemed to keep back the words. When the sound did break out, it came in a sort of sobbing scream. And the sound of that voice was not like the sound of the voice of Russell Wentworth Russell, though it came from his own throat.

"*Cook, I — I — stole the chocolate!*"

THE ESSENTIALS OF ARISTOCRACY

But agine they weeps an' agine they syes
As it b'aint our *bloomin' fault ;*
An' they syes to us as they 'ands us out :
" Now earn your bloody salt !"



HE knew they were to be enemies. Just why he could never have said, but he felt it in his bones when their eyes first met. Each of the two boys seemed to recognise the silent and mysterious challenge of combative childhood.

The new boy's face was shiny from soap and hot water, and under his arm he carried his new slate and a crisp yellow-covered First Book. The doctor had told his Aunt Martha that the children ought to be kept out of the way for the next few weeks. His Aunt Martha had cruelly suggested school for him.

It was with a sinking heart that he felt himself led relentlessly up the urchin-lined walk of the new Ward school.

"Hello, kid, whatcher name?" asked a

lean-legged boy with a cigarette stub in his mouth.

"Johnnie Armstrong, please," replied the new boy, almost tearfully.

But that one pair of challenging eyes — they followed him right up the walk and into the schoolhouse. There were scores of other audacious enemies who gazed critically at the patches on his knees and the hole in the toe of his boot, but in all that army of foes he knew to the marrow in his childish bones that this one particular boy was to be his one particular enemy.

Through all the long, stifling, terrible first hour of school life he furtively watched the figure of his fated opponent.

During recess the new boy hung about the hallway, homesick and miserable. He wondered what his Aunt Martha and the baby were doing. He knew what his mother was doing — she was in bed all the time, of course, and coughing away just the same as if he were there.

At the end of recess, when the bell rang, and the screaming, surging crowd of children

made the usual mad rush for their rooms, the new boy and the enemy came face to face in the hall. The new boy was bunted vigorously against the wall as his rival went past. The new boy expected it. A scream of delight broke from the groups of hurrying boys and girls as they crowded past, or stopped a moment to watch him get up and brush the dust from his carefully patched clothes.

For one weak moment, at noon, the new boy was tempted to slip out by the girl's door, and so escape. That would mean putting off the fight for a day at least.

One of the girls, as she hurried out, saw he was a new boy and made a face at him. The malevolence of that grimace turned him precipitately back. With quaking knees, and a pitiful mockery of a whistle, he walked out of the boys' door. The fight had to be that day!

It was all as he expected. *He*, of course, was waiting for him. With a choking sickliness at his throat he made steadily for the gate. Before he was half way there a jagged piece of cinder struck him on the cheek with

a stinging pain. He put up his hand and felt his face. It was bleeding. A surge of something like drunkenness swept through his frame. He did n't mind the bleeding. *Now* he did n't care. He was glad it really was bleeding. That meant that they had to fight it out then and there. He did n't mind fighting, nor did he mind getting whipped. But he felt that he would rather be pounded to pieces than endure any longer this uncertainty of position. One or the other must be boss, and boss for all time.

It hardly seemed his own hand that clutched wildly for a fragment of brick on the ground and flung it with all his force at the other boy. It went wide, for it was thrown in blind passion.

But it brought the enemy, bristling and aggressive, toward him.

"Did youse t'row that at me, kid?" demanded the boy who had thrown the coal cinder. He could not have been a year older than the other.

"'Course I did!" said the new boy, almost crying, but not daring to show it.

His voice sounded strange to him. He was a coward to the backbone; and no one knew that better than he himself. But his face was bleeding, and he did n't care now! And he was afraid the boys would find out that he really was a coward.

They fought. A dozen small boys saw the well-known preliminaries, and ran joyfully toward the two, screaming as they came, "A fight! a fight!" A man in an express waggon pulled up to look down on the struggle, and two or three girls watched open-mouthed from the sidewalk.

When the teacher came out of the school gate, five minutes later, she saw a group of small boys scurry suspiciously away. One boy limped — for kicking had been allowed — and the other left little drops of blood here and there on the sidewalk as he ran. It had not been to a finish, but the skinny, narrow-chested new boy had surprised them all. As for the new boy himself, he was supremely thankful that he was even alive.

His misery came back to him with a deadening rush when he remembered that he

must show himself at home. He crawled, snail-like, in at the back door and listened. The doctor was there, and he was glad of it. He was also glad when his Aunt Martha told him that he must not go in and see his mother. He could hear her coughing feebly, and the baby crying for something to eat. As his aunt went into his mother's room with a hot-water bottle, she called back for him to take some fried potatoes and hash off the stove and eat his dinner. He did as he was told, and hurried away before his aunt came out again. His face was still blood-stained and scratched.

Sick at heart, he slouched back to school. In the yard one of the boys said: "You licked 'm, Johnnie."

"Naw, he did n't, neither," said another. "Jim had 'im bleedin'."

"Aw gwan! that was n't in the fight! That 'uz when he chucked the cinder at 'im. You had 'im dead skart in the fight, did n't you, Johnnie?"

"'Course I did," said Johnnie Armstrong, stoutly, though he knew he was lying.

"'Course," said another boy. "There's Jim, now, skart to come over!"

Deliciously it dawned on him. It was a revelation to the new boy. Jim was skulking up the side of the school yard, with all the old, insolent air of aggression gone from his limping gait. Then he had licked him after all! The little narrow chest of the new boy swelled with pride.

But this was by no means the end of the battle. From that day the struggle for supremacy merely took on another form. The defeated boy realised that a physical encounter was entirely out of the question. So the warfare for relative rank, since there was no other way to fight it out, became a battle of tongues.

Jimmie Carson told the girls of the school that Johnnie Armstrong wore his Aunt Martha's stockings. Johnnie writhed in spirit, for he knew this was sadly true. But he gave his enemy the lie, and openly declared that Jimmie Carson's father had been put in jail for stealing a horse. This, too, was equally true. But Jimmie retorted by

saying he would n't wear patches on *his* pants. Johnnie once more regained his superiority by pointing out that he did n't have to wear his sister's old shoes.

So day by day the struggle went on. Johnnie Armstrong seemed to be getting the worst of it, until he remembered something that was as a Blücher for his Waterloo.

With a great air he said to his enemy: "The doctor comes to our house every day." The circle of listening urchins heard the remark with a certain awe. With them that meant either a baby or a funeral.

"Oh, that's nothin'," said the enemy. "My ma had three doctors when Tommie swallowed the penny." A chorus of wonder went up from the listening circle.

Johnnie snorted. "H'gh! A penny's nothin'! My mother's got consumption!"

"I don't care if she has. Mine gets chills and fever jus' terrible!"

Johnnie felt that dangerous surge sweep over him.

"Yes, but my mother coughs all day long, and has night sweats, and her medicine costs

about — about — well, about three dollars a bottle."

"H'gh! What 's that! When my ma gets one of her spells it 's just awful. She shakes so hard someone has to hold her in bed!"

Again Johnnie snorted his contempt.

"The doctor told my Aunt Martha my mother was going to cough herself to pieces, and that she might die any single day."

That rather staggered Jimmie Carson. A voice back in the crowd said, "Hurrah for Johnnie!" and the new boy's chest swelled with the old pride.

"And she can't ever get better," went on the exultant Johnnie. "And I 'll ride in a cab, see, same as I did at grandpa's funeral!"

The enemy recovered himself. "Oh, ridin' in a cab ain't nothin'. I *watched* my grandpa die! And Uncle Jake was killed, too. He was a fireman, and they brought him home on a board, after a wall fell right over on top of him, and he was all bleedin' terrible, and smashed up!"

A well-merited cheer from the circle

greeted this sally. The school bell rang before Johnnie Armstrong had a chance to meet the crushing charge. The children scampered away and Johnnie's head fell. All afternoon the sense of his defeat hung over him and made him miserable.

Late in the day there came a knock at the door and the teacher was called out.

As the teacher stepped in again Johnnie noticed his Aunt Martha in the hall. She was holding a handkerchief up to her eyes.

The teacher called Johnnie up to her desk. There she started to tell him something, stopped, slipped her arms around him, and burst out crying, to the wonder of the entire, open-eyed school. Johnnie turned crimson with shame. To be seen with a woman petting one was a terrible and awful thing to him. Jimmie Carson giggled audibly.

The teacher wiped away her tears, kissed the child sorrowfully, and falteringly whispered something in his ear.

She expected an outburst, but there was none, not even a sob.

As the child walked down to his desk for

his little book and slate, there was a strange, exultant gleam on his face. All the eyes of the school were upon him, but he saw only those of the enemy.

The sense of his defeat still hung over him. As he passed the other boy he looked down at him, as from a height.

"Say, Johnnie, what's wrong?" whispered his foe, curiosity overruling pride.

There was a ring of mingled sorrow and triumph in the voice of Johnnie as he said:

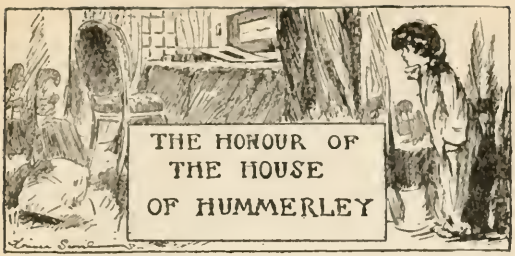
"My mother's dead, see!"

"Gosh!" said Jimmie, overcome. Johnnie knew he had won at last. Every eye in the school-room was on him as he went out.

In the hall his Aunt Martha was waiting to take him home, with her handkerchief still over her eyes.

THE HONOUR OF THE HOUSE OF HUMMERLEY

An' some as this, an' some as that,
We drifts to th' ends of th' Earth;
An' if One turns 'Ome, it's Ten forgets:
W'ich shows their gawdless birth!



HIS real name was Hugh Edward Hummerley, but they called him Tiddlywinks for short.

As the son of an English major who once had fought real battles in India, and who now built the biggest bridges and the deepest canals in all the world, Tiddlywinks took life very seriously. Eighteen years in the Service had given Tiddlywinks' papa very deep-rooted ideas on the value of discipline, and people pitied Tiddlywinks, as a rule, and said that his father was too strict with the child. But then people did n't understand. He might have been just a little afraid of his papa at times, knowing that his spoken word was Law, but for all that the child loved him with a love that was unutterable in its depth.

So when Major Hummerley started away

from Lonehurst for two years, to build one of his wonderful canals somewhere in South America, which was almost as far away as India itself, Tiddlywinks was unspeakably heavy of heart. His papa, in saying good-bye, had pointed out to him that he would be the only man left at home, as Harrington, his big brother, was at Princeton most of the year, and could not be around to take care of things. Harrington was really not his brother, but just his step-brother, for his own mother was not much older than Hal; but then it was just the same as being brothers.

So when Tiddlywinks remembered that he was the only man left with his mother at Lonehurst, it was natural he should regard himself as the guardian and protector of the house of Hummerley, and consequently take both life and himself quite seriously.

But over and above all this, when his papa was saying those last good-byes to the weeping and broken-hearted Tiddlywinks and his mamma, he laughingly told the child that thereafter it should be his grave and solemn duty to look after and watch over his mother,

and always be good to her and make her happy. Being the only man at home, his father went on with mock-seriousness, it was expected that he, Tiddlywinks, should carry out these last despatches and duly deliver the said mamma safely over into his hands at the end of the two years. All of this the weeping and unhappy Tiddlywinks took with the utmost seriousness, and solemnly promised to do, even though his father laughed as he bent down and kissed Tiddlywinks' mamma on the cheek, as the brougham came round the drive and the boxes were piled on the seat.

Tiddlywinks finished his weep, nevertheless, for he loved his father with a mighty love, and his heart was aching with the thought of being left alone in the big house. He knew that as soon as Hal went back to Princeton a terrible loneliness would settle down on that homestead of Hummerley. He was not really alone, of course, but then, he had always been half afraid of his mamma, who always wore the most wonderful and beautiful dresses, and had never been the same to him since the summer she left him

with the German nurse and went away, across the ocean, for a whole year. Since then she seemed to be always telling poor Tiddlywinks to be careful and not soil her lace when he wanted to hug her, and that it was rude to stare at people, and that he ought not to play in the servants' hall. In fact, he had to forsake his baby ways, and in time they forgot to call each other "Heart's Desire;" and though they ate and walked and talked together, they drifted apart and became as strangers. The boy soon learned to give her only a formal little kiss, on the cheek or forehead, very much as his papa did. In time, even this occurred only on the necessary occasions, which were, of course, when he was brought down in the morning, and again at night, before he went to bed.

It was no wonder then that Tiddlywinks, in his utter loneliness, used to steal down to the forbidden servants' hall and lavish his love on the portly but good-hearted cook, who gave him, in return for his affection, such quantities of cream-puffs, and custards,

and pickles, and oranges, and cakes, that he used to get a stomach-ache four days out of seven.

Of course, it was all different when Hal came home from Princeton. Hal was such a jolly fellow and did whatever he liked. He had taught Tiddlywinks how to put, and used to take him riding and show him how to smoke, and laughed uproariously whenever he choked. Tiddlywinks, indeed, loved Hal so much that three times he had smoked himself sick, when Hal had shown Lees-Smith what a jolly fine smoker Tiddlywinks was, all for Hal's sake. Besides this, he had shot off Hal's gun five times, and had even been allowed to go fishing with him, and pull in the little ones, which sometimes were awfully hard to get. The three times that Tiddlywinks had made up his mind to run away and be a Spanish Pirate, or some other awful Being, and was caught each time and put to bed in disgrace, were not, you may know, when Hal was at home. Hal even used to make his mamma allow Tiddlywinks to stay up at night and listen while they sang, for

Tiddlywinks' mamma sang beautifully. Hal, of course, sang beautifully too, — but then, Hal's singing was so different. When his mamma sang it used to make him think of the angels in the window at the end of the Cathedral, only he knew that real angels did not wear lace, and would let you kiss and hug them as often as you wanted to. At least, angels never made you afraid of them, anyway.

There was one particular man, with an iron-grey moustache and thin grey hair, who used to come to dinner at Tiddlywinks' house and stay in the evenings to hear his mamma sing. Tiddlywinks hated this man with all the fervour of his childish heart. James, the coachman, once told him that this man was a General, and a greater man than his own papa, — a thing which Tiddlywinks could never believe. Still, he was very tall and very straight, and used to frown at Tiddlywinks, and then turn and smile at his mamma; and naturally the unsophisticated little Tiddlywinks always used to wonder what right this Man with the Bald Head had to look in his mamma's eyes and smile so affectionately.

It made his lonely little heart burn with jealousy. At first he used to think the man was an ogre, because his teeth were so white, but when he told this to his mamma, she called him a wicked little boy for talking so dreadfully about a nice, kind gentleman.

However, Tiddlywinks was steadfast in his hate, and it was with all his soul that he hated this Man with the Bald Head. One day he heard the cook say that that man had no business around the house so often, shaking her head very ominously as she made the remark to Sally, the maid.

After that, Tiddlywinks' life was one of endless anxiety and watchfulness. He had a vague idea that the Ogre was going to burn down the stables some night, or carry off the silver-ware, or steal his mamma. Had his papa not told him to take good care of her? In his extremity he stole Hal's gun and hid it under his bed. There it was found a few days later by Sally, the housemaid, whereupon Tiddlywinks was once more sent early to bed, and all but set down as an incorrigible little murderer.

Tiddlywinks said nothing, but he watched the tall man with the white teeth as a cat watches a mouse. Even his mamma at last noticed it, and made it a rule to send him up to bed immediately dinner was finished. There he used to roll and toss, and think of the burning injustice of it all, and wonder what his papa would say if he only knew. Then he would sit up in bed and listen to the sound of the music, while his mamma was singing down in the drawing-room. He was passionately fond of hearing his mamma sing, and after a time he grew bolder and used to go out and stand at the banister of the stairway and listen. Then he would steal downstairs, and even creep up the dim hallway, and push under the portière and stand there motionless, in his long, white nightgown, listening with rapt attention. As soon as he saw the music was ending, he would slip back through the doorway and run shivering up to bed.

One night, as he climbed the stairs after the singing had come to an end, he stopped and listened, for he heard his mamma talking in a frightened way.

"Don't, don't, Reginald!" he heard her cry, "for my sake, for your own, don't tempt me."

Then the Ogre, the great, tall, white-toothed Ogre, said something about how much he loved her.

"No, no!" his mamma answered, "I shall not, — I must — Oh, God! what shall I do!"

That was all he listened to. He crept up to bed. He knew he had been a sneak for listening to other people talking. Hal would never have done that! But he had not meant to. He said to himself over and over again that he had not meant to. Yet now he knew it all. His mamma did n't love him because she loved the Ogre. That was it, she loved the Ogre. Then his mamma was wicked. And he had promised his papa that he would take care of her! What would he say when he came home and found out? What *would* he say?

In his misery he got up and knelt by his bed, and said every prayer he knew. After his solitary little childish heart had argued it

out that night, he said he would send for Hal. Good old Hal would come and tell him what to do. Hal knew so well how to do things.

The next morning Tiddlywinks contrived to avoid kissing his mamma. It was a mockery he would go through no longer, for she was wicked and loved the Ogre. By noon he had sent a letter off to Princeton, to Hal. The cook had addressed the envelope for him, and he had sat down and, with great labour and infinite pains, had secretly penned the first letter of his lifetime. It was just five words: "Der Hal come hom quick." Then he sneaked out to the stables and gave it to James to post, along with seven precious pennies as a bribe to silence. All that day Tiddlywinks did not care for even cream-puffs or cheese-cakes, and the cook told Sally the housemaid that she knew Tiddlywinks was getting the measles or scarlatina — she could n't say which — he was so quiet, and worse than that, had calmly declined to scrape out the ice-cream freezer!

When he sat down to dinner that night,

Tiddlywinks was studiously and remarkably silent. The Ogre was there as usual, but the child scarcely dared to look in his face, lest the Ogre should see how he hated him. He knew it was useless for him to try to hide it. All the while the Ogre was eating his fish, the child was silently, ridiculously praying, "Please, God, choke this wicked Ogre to death with a fish-bone! Please, God, choke him; choke him — choke him dead!" until it ran through his little mind in a sort of musical refrain. When the Ogre finished his trout without choking, Tiddlywinks knew that even God himself had deserted him.

After that he felt a mysterious desire to fling the salad-bowl at the Ogre's head — just on the little shiny, bald spot. The child wondered if the great heavy, cut-glass bowl with the sharp points would kill the man dead if it hit him on the right spot.

At last dinner was over, and Tiddlywinks got down from his chair and was walking out of the room, when his mother called him back.

"You have not kissed me to-night, darling!" she said. Tiddlywinks was silent. "Will you not kiss mamma, dear?" she asked, as she came over to where he stood, defiant, yet miserable, looking down stolidly at the pattern in the carpet.

"You may easily find a too willing substitute," murmured the man at the table. Tiddlywink's mother turned pale, and raised her finger at the man in a frightened way.

"Very well, Tiddlywinks," she said with a sigh, "I shall not make you do so."

When the child had gone to bed with a swelling heart, she sat thinking for a long time, until the man's voice roused her and they went into the library for coffee.

Tiddlywinks' mother sang that evening as she had never sung before. The lonely child in his bed heard her, crept down the stairs, and sat for a long time on the bottom step, listening. Then the music seemed to charm him, luring him through the doorway, and he stood there in the shadow, a motionless little bare-footed figure in white.

"She must be one of the angels, after all,"

thought Tiddlywinks, as he listened; and as the Ogre stood beside her and bent over her, it seemed to the child that he could be none other than the Supreme Ruler of the Bad Place.

When the song was finished, not one of the three persons in the room moved. Tiddlywinks was almost afraid to breathe.

After a long pause, he saw the tall man with the grey moustache suddenly bend down and put his arms around his mother. And his mother, his very own mother, leaned her head back in one long, long kiss. Tiddlywinks shuddered. By mere human intuition he knew it was wrong. He was only a child, a mere baby, but he thought of his father, and of his own promise, and the passion of the murderer went tingling through his childish veins. It was the instinct in him to protect his own — just as he had once bitten his German nursemaid for burning his nigger doll.

He stole in on his noiseless bare feet, over to the grate where the shining brass poker leaned against the metal. It was nearly as

long as the child himself, and it was tremendously heavy, but while the Ruler of the Bad Place was still trying to kiss his mother's soul into the Place of Crawling Things, by that one long embrace, he lifted the poker with both hands and brought it down with all his force on the little, shiny, bald spot on the man's head. After all, it was not a very heavy blow, but the man fell to the floor like a log. Tiddlywinks' mother saw the bleeding man, and the child, all in white, standing over him, gave one short scream, and fainted. Then the poker fell from Tiddlywinks' hands, and he turned and fled. He did not stop until he came to his own room. There he flung himself on his bed, and writhed in the awful consciousness of having killed, as he thought, two human beings.

When Hal came hurrying home by the night train, knowing something was wrong, he found Tiddlywinks still sobbing away as if his heart would break. Then Hal and his mother had a long, long talk, shut up together

down in the library. A few moments later Tiddlywinks heard some one open the door very softly, and the first thing he knew, somebody was crying over him. It was his "Heart's Desire." Then the two got down on their knees and said their prayers together, for she was still a young woman, and had been very lonely. After that she drew him to her breast and murmured mother nonsense to him until he fell asleep, and there was even a tear or two on her face when she finally tucked him in.

But what Harrington Hummerley and his mother talked of when she went down to the library again, no one shall ever know, although the next day a long, tear-stained letter was on its way to South America, where a certain grey-eyed major was building one of his wonderful canals.

As for the Ogre, he went away and never came back again, for Hal was tackle in his college team, and when a Princeton "Tackle" once knocks a man down — well — he never comes begging about for a second experience.

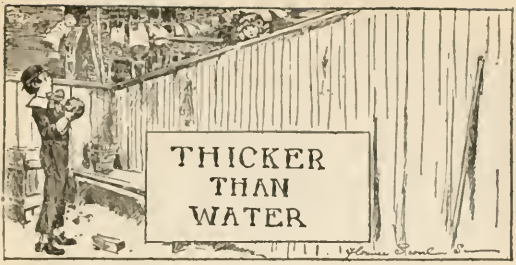
And now Tiddlywinks kisses and hugs and mauls his mamma as much and as often as he pleases, and they call each other "Heart's Desire" once more, and though he leaves a dozen smudges on her very best gown, why should anything be said of a little thing like that?

In fact, Hal took Tiddlywinks to Princeton with him for a few days, and when they came back James, the coachman, was informed by wire that Major Hummerley was forwarding by steamer "Colombo" one live alligator. This was duly handed over to Tiddlywinks on his seventh birthday, with the information that her name was Flora, and that the same was for carrying out the instructions of a superior officer.

But the cook always insisted on the point that there was such a thing as making a child take life too seriously.

THICKER THAN WATER

An' you tawks of 'Ome an' th' sins of 'Ome,
But I syes 'ere, over my grog,
As there ain't no smell like a Lun'non smell,
An' th' stink of a Lun'non fog!



GEORGIE was sadly disappointed in America, and he made no bones about it. When he had first been told that he was going to New York for three whole months, they — that is, Georgie and his family — were living down near Weymouth. So day after day he used to stand on the Channel cliffs and look out at the great ships passing back and forth and wonder just which ones were going to America, — America the wonderful, the unknown, — and just how long it would take them, and if it was really true that the world was round, and that though they kept on and on and on for ever they could never come to where the sun went down over the edge of Everything.

Georgie did not understand exactly why his father was going to America, but he knew well

enough that it had something to do with the killing of seals away up near the North Pole, and to find out why it was wrong for some people to kill them and not for others. He also knew that his father was a Great Man, and did much toward keeping the Empire intact.

So Georgie could not contain himself when his father had promised to let him stay with his Uncle Charley in New York while the Great Man himself mysteriously went on to Washington, to find out things about the seals. Georgie's father had even gone further than this, and bought him an air-gun, to shoot Wild Indians. Georgie could not hear America mentioned without dreaming of Wild Indians. He had seen Buffalo Bill at the Olympia in London, of course, and there he had first vaguely learned what a wonderful place America really was. The thought of having an air-gun and going to a land where there were all the Wild Indians one wanted to shoot seemed very delightful to Georgie, and even the Captain on the steamer told him just how to capture Indians and where the best place for buffaloes was. The

Captain's stories sometimes frightened Georgie a bit, but then he practised with his air-gun every day, on porpoises, and the Captain acknowledged that Indians were n't a bit harder to shoot than porpoises, only you can never tell, of course, just when you *do* hit a porpoise.

So when Georgie and his air-gun landed in New York and he found that city a place with houses in it very much like London, and was taken to his Uncle Charley's home and found it very much like their own house in Portland Place, though not quite so gloomy-looking, he was disappointed beyond words. Here his father left him and hurried away to Washington. Now he had been three weeks in America and had not seen one Wild Indian!

In fact, instead of being the hunter, Georgie had been the hunted. When he had loaded up his air-gun and made his appearance on the street, a number of very dirty boys made fun of his Eton jacket and his white collar and his little dicer, and called him "monkey," and threw things at him, and forced him to beat a hasty retreat homeward.

The injustice of this stirred up Georgie's blood, and he fought with one of his assailants, whereupon the rest, in defiance of all principles of warfare hitherto recognised by Georgie, attacked him vigorously from behind, and sent him home with ruined clothes and a good deal of blood on his white collar.

There Georgie found it best to remain. He could not make his Uncle Charley see why an English-born boy should tog himself out like American children simply because he was spending a few months in America, though Georgie pointed out to his absent-minded old uncle that his English knickerbockers were so dreadfully baggy at the knees that street urchins naturally yelled "English Bloke" after him and offered to do battle with him on every occasion.

So there was nothing for it but to stay at home. He at least had the court, or, as Thomson called it, the back yard. This back yard was not large, but Georgie made the most of it. A high board fence, over which a few withered morning-glories climbed, shut it in from the rest of the world, and added

to its air of desolation. Occasionally, but not often, a cat appeared, and this was always shot at and always missed by the owner of the air-gun.

So Georgie lived a life of absolute and unbroken loneliness, knowing he could find no companionship on the streets, and realising that he was among aliens. He could not help remembering those long golden summer days at Weymouth, where he used to watch the Channel ships going back and forth in the blue distance, and climb the cliffs for eggs, and dig all day in the sand, and have plenty of really very nice little boys to play with.

The world, however, suddenly changed for Georgie. It all happened one warm afternoon, after a day when his solitude had grown unbearable and he had planned to run away to sea. The only trouble was that he did not know where the sea was, and his Uncle Charley had not altogether enlightened him on the subject. It was just like such a country not to have any sea!

Without the least word of warning a big, beautifully painted rubber ball came bounding

over the high board fence of Georgie's back yard. George chased after it, and picked it up, and eyed it curiously. It was that sort of rubber ball you see only in England, and Georgie wondered how in the world it ever got to America. He squeezed it and bounced it once or twice to make sure that it was real.

At that moment a head appeared above the top of the fence. Georgie looked at the head, and the head looked at Georgie. He thought it was the curliest head he had ever seen, all covered with soft leonine yellow hair that was very much tousled. She was a very little girl, and Georgie saw, too, that she was a rather nice little girl.

After a moment of silent gazing down at him, she stood up on the top of the fence.

"Little boy," she cried imperiously, "little boy, throw my ball back, please!"

Georgie, overlooking for once in his life the indignity of being so addressed, dropped the ball from his hand in astonishment.

In that calling voice there was a soft modulation, a full-vowelled intonation, that smote

like a memory on his childish heart-strings and carried him back across the Atlantic.

"Oh, I say, you're a little English girl, aren't you?" He looked up at the head above the fence with mingled joy and astonishment. "You look dref'ly like a lion with so much hair!"

"And — and you're a little English boy, are n't you? Oh, is n't — But I'm *not* a little girl, though! I'm almost thirteen." Here the lady of thirteen stood up on the very top of the fence to show the full dignity of her height.

"'Course," said Georgie, the diplomat's son, "you *is* dref'ly big, now I can see your legs!"

Here, he knew, was a friend that must be hung on to. "My name is George Henry Purcell; what's yours, little gi — I mean, please, m'am?" said Georgie, catching himself in time.

"I'm Mary Edif Stanley, and we live on Banbury Road, the *real* Banbury Road, you know. That's in Oxford, and I've got a tricycle home."

"Then you know my Uncle Harry at Maudlin! Why, *I* go up to Oxford often and often. And I've seen the Bump races, and Uncle Harry and me went up Maudlin Tower, and the Provost of Balliol gave me some lemon squash, and Uncle Harry showed me the holes Cromwell's cannons made in New College. You know 'em, don't you?"

"Why, yes," said Mary Edith, jumping down on Georgie's side of the fence. "And is n't the Provost a funny fat old man?"

"Yes, and you remember how he grunts? And are n't the barges awf'ly jolly? And the Proggins! *Is n't* his velvet sleeves like a woman's? And I s'pose you've seen my Uncle Harry rowing in the Eight? He's '3,' you know."

Mary Edith s'posed she had, and asked if he was the one with the awf'ly *hairy* legs.

Then they fell into a general conversation, and he explained that he was usually called Georgie, and Mary Edith sang, "Oh, Georgie, Georgie, Puddin'y Pie!" and then the two found their bedrooms were right next to each other, where the windows were

only about six feet apart, and Mary Edith told all about coming over on the "Teutonic," and Georgie boasted how he and his father, the Great Man, had had dinner on the "Terrible" and he had n't been a bit afraid of the guns. Then they sat down on the grass together and glorified England, and sang the charms of Oxford, and dilated on the beauties of London and Weymouth, and belittled America, and railed at New York until they found they 'd forgotten nearly all the really nice things they wanted to say, and simply sat and looked at each other.

Then all of a sudden a piece of mud hit Mary Edith on the ear.

"That 's Freckles," said Mary Edith, quietly. And the next moment a very freckled face appeared slowly above the top of the board fence. It was followed by a very lanky boy, who, after throwing another piece of mud at Mary Edith, turned a handspring over the top of the paling and nearly fell over Georgie in landing.

"This is Freckles, Georgie," said Mary Edith, casually. "He lives in our house with

us. He's not English, you know; he's only an American boy."

"Well, I guess yes!" said Freckles with spirit, "and us Americans licked the English. We licked the stuffin' out of them twice, and we can do it again!"

"Freckles, you know that's a lie," calmly reproved Mary Edith.

"Not on your life." Freckles wagged his head knowingly. "I guess you never heard of Washington. He did n't do a thing to your old King George, did he?"

"*Did* he, Georgie?" asked Mary Edith, with a sudden qualm of fear. Georgie, long ago and in certain indirect ways, had heard something about this same Washington, and his face fell. He nodded.

"Then we just *let* him do it," protested Mary Edith. Freckles smiled a very superior smile. "You did, eh! Just ask Aunt Mary."

So the little cloud, no bigger than the face of patriotic Freckles, overcast the sky of a perfect day. A wordless sense of unhappiness fell upon Mary Edith and Georgie, and

when they arranged for a meeting the next day they did it without the knowledge of Freckles.

But many were the happy afternoons, following that first meeting, the two aliens spent together, and when night came it was even nicer, for they would lock their bedroom doors and give the mystic signal, and then lean out of their windows and talk to each other of Home and how funny it was to call trams street cars, and 'buses stages, and say blocks for squares. They also marvelled together at the queer little American pennies, and asked each other why it was poor Freckles always said *kent* instead of *cawnt*. They also decided that a country where one could n't buy brandy-balls was a dreadfully poor place to live, and that stone walls were much nicer than old board fences, especially board fences with so many nails in them. Mary Edith reluctantly confessed that ice cream soda was n't *bad*, and when the same young lady came into possession of a box of chocolate creams and these were transferred from one window to the other on the end of a parasol

brought up from the back hall for the purpose, Georgie half allowed that American chocolates after all were n't so *very* much worse than bull's-eyes and brandy-balls.

So the homesick English boy forgot his loneliness and the two aliens got along very well together, and the disappointment about the Indians was forgotten. Georgie saved the life of Mary Edith's doll when it had a most terrible sawdust hemorrhage, and Mary Edith learned how to load the air-gun, and the days slipped away, and that little back yard would have been a second Eden were it not for the presence of Freckles. Freckles was older and bigger than the two aliens, and they knew he could say things better than they could, and he was always telling how the United States licked England in the Revolution, and licked her again in the War of 1812, and could lick her now if she was n't afraid to fight!

All this filled Georgie with a sense of inexpressible resentment, and brought on many a wordy battle between Mary Edith and Freckles. Georgie knew that Mary Edith

did n't know so much about it as Freckles did, or as he did himself, for he remembered that Washington *had* beaten King George, and Perry had met the enemy and made them his. The consciousness of that old-time defeat of his countrymen lay on Georgie as a sort of personal disgrace. Still, he felt there must have been some good reason why England had let Washington win. There must have been something behind Perry's victory on Lake Erie!

"Why," said Freckles, "you two kids seem to think England's the only thing that ever happened! Aunt Mary says that when it is n't raining in London you can't see your hand for fogs."

"Fogs are great *fun*, truf'ly, Freckles," gravely declared Mary Edith.

"And rain is rather nice — in England," said Georgie.

"And it's awf'ly cold and blowy here in the winter," claimed Mary Edith.

"And you can't buy brandy-balls here," added Georgie.

"And, Georgie, is n't it terrible! They

don't know what a tuck shop means over here!"

"Oh, you kids make me tired," said Freckles. "But I know one thing. If *I* was going travelling, *I* would n't go to a country that had licked mine so often."

Georgie was silent. It was always several hours too late when he thought of the right answer.

"Freckles, you 're telling your lies again." That was the way Mary Edith wriggled out of answering such questions.

"All right, if you think they 're lies, go and ask Aunt Mary. We licked you in the Revolution, — licked you just horrid, — and we did the same in 1812. There was Perry's battle on Lake Erie, and there was the 'Hornet,' and the 'Kearsarge,' and the 'Chesapeake,' and the 'Argus,' and the — the — Oh, shoot, why, there were so many times we did it I can't remember them all. But if you don't believe me, just go and ask Aunt Mary."

"I *intend* to ask Aunt Mary," said Mary Edith, tearfully, "but I 'll tell you right now,

Freckles, I know you're telling the most hor'ble stories!"

"Yes, Freckles," said Georgie quite as dolefully, "and *I'm* going to ask my Uncle Charley."

This Georgie, with much fear and stammering, actually did.

"What — what's this the youngster is trying to get at?" said Georgie's Uncle Charley, looking up over his paper when the questions were timidly put to him. "American Revolution? Bah, all rot, boy, all rot! The American Revolution was won right in England — sympathy of the great middle classes of the home country! But, dear me, child, you can't understand those things! What's that? War of 1812? No, sir," thundered Georgie's Uncle Charley, in his good British wrath, "no, sir, it was *not* won by America. England had her hands tied, sir, her hands tied fighting Napoleon, and she had nothing but a few scrub regulars to send out. But they did what they were sent for, and along with the Canadian militia they kept it mighty hot for the American forces

for three years, sir. As for the ultimate outcome of those campaigns, sir, I have only to refer you to the actual text of the treaty of Ghent and Professor Goldwin Smith's — but, dear me, you are only a child! I quite forgot for the moment — quite forgot! So off to bed with you now!"

Georgie went scampering up the stairs with a sudden new lightness in his heart. The Empire had been upheld. The stain had been washed off the escutcheon.

He waited impatiently until everything had grown quiet and then gave the accustomed signal, — six knocks on the wall with his shoe, — and leaned out the window to tell Mary Edith.

"It *was* a lie," whispered Georgie, "and Uncle Charley says that the Revolution was won in England, by what he called the middle classes in between, you know."

"There!" said Mary Edith, with conviction. "I always knew that Freckles was telling stories. Oh, I say, Georgie, *are n't* you glad?"

Georgie made the sound that usually ac-

companies the mastication of a chocolate cream. Mary Edith understood.

"Georgie, there's just one thing to do. We must go right straight and tell Freckles."

"Yes, we'll have to go right straight and tell Freckles," echoed Georgie, triumphantly.

"Then you go down to the side door and I'll let you in." Mary Edith was a woman of action. "Are you afraid, Georgie?" she asked, as she noticed him hesitate.

"Oh, no," said Georgie, stoutly.

He closed the window and slipped down through the big hall and out through the back door in his white Madras pajamas. At the side door of the other house Mary Edith met him in her nightgown. They took hold of each other's hand, for it was very dark inside and everyone was asleep.

They went noiselessly from room to room in their bare feet, silently climbed the wide stairway, and then went up still another stairway.

They slipped through the door of Freckles' room and carefully closed themselves in. Mary Edith punched the sleeping Freckles

smartly on the ribs. Freckles did not stir.

"*You* do it, Georgie; you can do it the hardest." Georgie thumped the figure curled up in the bed with all the strength of his arm, remembering past insults to flag and country.

"Wha' 's the matter now?" said Freckles, sleepily.

"It 's a lie, Freckles, a hor'ble lie. You did n't really beat us," said Mary Edith.

"The Revolution was won in England by the middle classes in between, and you knew it all the time!"

"And you did n't lick us in the war of 1812, either," cried Georgie. "England had her hands and feet tied, for she was fighting with Napoleon, and that 's just the same as if Mary Edith tried to lick Uncle Charley and you at the same time, and she could just send out a few men, just the tiniest few men you can think of."

"And we did n't do a thing to them, did we?" yawned Freckles, settling his head more comfortably down in the pillow.

"But you did n't really *beat*," said Georgie, with a swelling sense of new-born pride.

"'Course you did n't," declared Mary Edith.

Freckles turned over and yawned sleepily once more. "Oh, you kids must be crazy. Go way and le' me 'lone."

. . . . . .

"Georgie," whispered Mary Edith in the big dark hall, as they held each other's hands and felt with their bare toes for the first step of the stairway, "are n't you awf'ly glad you 're English?"

For the second time that night Georgie made a sound as if he were eating a chocolate cream. The Empire had been upheld!

INSTRUMENTS OF EROS

Oh, it's then I 'ankers after 'Ome,
An' a sniff o' Bethnal Green,
An' 'Er, who was queen o' Pub an' 'All,
— An' th' Things w'ot Might 'Ave Been!

HE had always been called "Hungry" — Hungry Dooley. Just how he came by this name no one knew. It was thought by many to have been inspired by the boy's thin, wistful-looking face, with its restless eyes and queer little outstanding cheekbones. Others, again, held that the name sprang from Hungry's passion for carting away envied loads of luscious fruit and delectable vegetables, picked up along the river front. These he disappeared with into the dim recesses of an East Side cellar which he dignified by the name of home.

For Hungry, besides being an everyday wharf rat, was the stay and support of three even hungrier-looking sisters and a sickly mother, to say nothing of an alcoholic father

who was able, now and then, to beat or bully a penny or two out of him.

It was only right, therefore, that Hungry, as he wandered busily about the odoriferous curbs and the crate-covered docks of the river front, should take himself seriously. He had, of course, many rivals, for there was always a wandering herd of equally hungry-eyed, ragged-looking urchins haunting those alluring wharves, flitting about from boat to boat and cart to cart, like a flock of over-grown city sparrows, ever ready to pounce down upon and fight over any stray piece of fruit, melon rind, or other dubiously misplaced edible to be found among those over-crowded, dirty, busy, clamorous streets and stalls where men bring from far off all those things that go to feed a great, hungry, heedless city.

But the most opulent of those hawk-eyed scavengers was Hungry Dooley. Not an over-ripe banana fell to the ground but he knew of it. Not an unsalable apple was cast away but he had sized it up as a matter of food-stuff. Not a remnant of old fish

was left behind but his aquiline eye was on it.

And things went well, and business throve with Hungry. In fact, as time on, he even took unto himself a mate.

She was as diminutive, as thin of leg, and as dirtily unkempt as Hungry himself. But one could see by the way in which he laid his choicest portions of refuse banana and bruised pineapple before her, that to him she was as a goddess on a pedestal, and a thing to kneel to, and worship, and adore.

So plain was it that Hungry had a "stiddy" that envious stories went about through the busy little band, and even certain taunts were thrown out.

But none of these disturbed either Hungry or his sweetheart Brickie, who, by the way, was seen rapidly to gain flesh under Hungry's solicitous eye.

And as spring glided into summer all life changed for Hungry Dooley. A rose mist seemed to hang over the river, and a happy golden halo over the world. He did not know what it meant, but the rattle of the

waggons seemed like unending music to him. The sound of the cables became, to his ears, like the murmur of running streams. The alley where Brickie lived was an Eden and a place of infinite delight, and with her at his side he was happy, indescribably happy!

In Hungry the paternal instinct had developed at an early age. He even gave Brickie, willingly, his last bit of orange, for Brickie's appetite was enormous. He found he could satisfy the gnawing pain in his own stomach by saving the peelings and eating them afterwards, when Brickie was n't looking. At times, it was true, the gnawing would become frightfully strong, but on his hungriest day he would rather see Brickie's lips close deliciously round the end of an over-ripe banana than eat it himself.

For three beautiful but fleeting months Brickie clung to him, and the rose mist hung over the river, and the halo over his world.

But it was a dark day for Hungry Dooley when Ikey Rosenberg discovered that riverside El Dorado. When Ikey found a place where fruit could be had for the picking up,

he transferred his hunting-ground from the East Side to the region of wharves. Ikey was an element from a different world, however, and from the first it was felt he was an intruder and a menace.

He brought seven pennies in his pocket, the very first day of his invasion, and took pains to show them, by which vanity he lost three. But in two short days he had won the heart of Brickie Sniffins with a broken mouth-organ, a little red and blue lantern, and four penny dishes of ice cream, purchased, with great ostentation, from the despised Italian who dispensed that cooling essence of perpetual joy from a three-wheeled red cart on a nearby corner.

Brickie, in a wonderfully short space of time, grew to feel that she was cut out for a man who had money and could treat her as a girl ought to be treated. She openly declared that she did not care to be seen with a person who could n't wear shoes and stockings, and who had to live in a cellar. That declaration was made the day after Ikey had taken her round and showed her the riches

that lay in dazzling disarray in the window of the store of "Isaac Rosenberg, Pawnbroker."

The final break came when Brickie stood on the curb with Ikey and made faces at Hungry.

Hungry saw the change, but he said nothing. Strange tales went the rounds of the wharves, and it was said he was silently eating his heart out. Disconsolately he passed by bananas and onions and oranges, letting ready hands snatch the treasures from under his very nose. He would not even stop to fight over a discarded pineapple.

How it all might have turned out it is hard to say. But on the paltriest accidents of life hinges the course of destiny.

It came about simply because the driver of an express waggon took four glasses of beer, when he knew three glasses were enough. His waggon was piled high with crates on their way to the commission house. And in those crates were little wooden boxes of imported Maryland strawberries. Their fragrance was wafted up and down the wharf, and they glowed through the chinks

in the crate in such a manner that Hungry could not help following after the waggon.

When the driver cut a street corner too short, and sent his front waggon wheel up on the curbstone, Hungry knew that top crate was going to fall off — knew it ten seconds before it struck the ground.

The huge crate burst, of course, and a great odorous, crimson wealth of Maryland strawberries tumbled out into the road. A couple of passing waggon wheels crushed juicily through them. The driver sat helplessly in his seat, calling all the curses of heaven down on the heads of his docile team.

But Hungry had been ready. He fell bodily on the ruddy and tumbled mass, and at the risk of being run down by a dozen passing rigs, scooped up the fallen wealth as he had never scooped up fruit before. Brickie they should be for — Brickie — every one of them. Brickie's mouth it was he seemed to see closing on them as he thrust handful after handful into his grimy coal sack, now reminiscent, in perfumes, of many mingled fruits. The fact, too, that they

were out of season added infinitely to their value.

But the driver felt that he had to get even with some one. Still swearing, he climbed down slowly from his waggon. He broke off one of the sides of the ruined crate. With it he viciously welted the unheeding child down on his knees in the road. The child did not move, so he struck him again, and then again. Still the boy with the bag kept on gathering in the scattered berries. A policeman sauntered up, tasted a berry or two, and told the driver to leave the kid alone. But in a minute or two the whole herd was upon them, and the crate was irretrievably lost. It was Hungry, however, who had the pick of the pile.

Brickie watched the scene with wistful eyes from the sidewalk. She had not been getting on very well with Ikey of late, and when he declined to enter the struggle for some of the berries, she felt a new and strange contempt for him. For Brickie was very fond of strawberries!

Then, before the whole world, Hungry

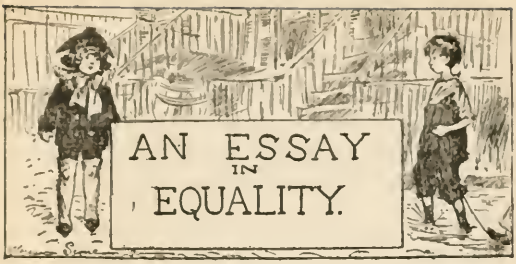
limped over to the curb and proffered her his bag of precious fruit. Brickie blushed, declined with feigned reluctance, blushed deeper, and then broke out crying. Hungry gave Ikey Rosenberg a black eye for jeering at those tears.

Through her sobs she protested that she would never do it again, and having eyed the open bag, and caught a glimpse of the wealth therein, made a mouth at Ikey Rosenberg that decided the matter for all time.

Once more the rose-tinted mists seemed to dwell on the river, and a golden halo hung over the city, but few people ever knew that a mere little crate of Maryland strawberries was the means of bringing back a lost Eden!

AN ESSAY IN EQUALITY

For there's 'Ennery in 'is 'ansom cab,
A-goin' up an' down th' Strand:
An' if I was 'Ennery, an' 'Ennery me,
I'd give this bloomin' 'and.



IT was his by right of discovery. For two glorious weeks he had puddled in it, and now, naturally enough, he looked upon it as his own private property.

It was not, to be sure, in his own Alley, but then he had found it first, and it was his by right of occupation. And now, if need be, he was ready to do battle for it, as any son of Adam is ever ready to do for his own, or what he calls his own.

But then it was *worth* fighting for! It was the most beautiful of mud puddles, three inches deep and four whole feet long. Such things should never have been in a well-ordered city, but every day the watering-cart man who lumbered up and down the Avenue on his great red wagon left the water-hydrant leaking a little, so that the puddle was per-

petually replenished. Suns might shine on it, and winds might blow over it, but morning, noon, and night it remained the same tempting thing of delight, oozy of bottom, and sweet to the touch of shoeless feet.

Each day the boy from the Alley brought his sailboat, made of a shingle, with three rakish masts and a rigging of dirty string, and sailed it adventurously up and down his puddle. With a piece of cord tied to the bowsprit, which was very much on the bias, the boy from the Alley puckered up his childish lips, and up to his ankles in mud, choo-choo-chooed delightedly as he pulled his little boat back and forth from one end of the puddle to the other.

And for two golden weeks this continued. Then, one morning, he found an invader on his property. The stranger was a boy of four, wearing shiny gaiters of tan leather and a black-velvet suit with rows of Glittering Things on it. The intruder was not exactly in the puddle, but he was looking down at it with such happy and longing eyes

that the boy from the Alley cleared for action.

He eyed the invader darkly. He had found a footprint on his Crusoe's Island. With curious and half-envious eyes, he noticed the Glittering Things worn by the other. Then, with a great air, he launched his little boat and choo-choo-chooed up and down the puddle simply to show the other boy that he was the owner. He contrived, at the same time, to splash as much mud and water as possible on the boy in velvet. But the boy in velvet did not seem to mind in the least. In fact, he drew nearer, and stood at the edge of the puddle, his patent-leather shoes sinking in the mud.

The boy from the Alley resented the intrusion.

"G'won, kid," he said belligerently, although he was not so tall as the other by three good inches.

"T'ant I watch oo?" lisped the other, wistfully, in a voice of such baby timidity that it filled the Alley boy with disgust. In fact, the Alley boy was disagreeably sur-

prised. When he knew the invader was n't going to fight him, his respect for the invader went down ten degrees.

Still, the owner of the puddle felt not a little proud of the fact that a being wearing so many Glittering Things should come and ask favours of him. He even said that the boy in velvet might come over and sail the boat. But just once! No more than once, because that boat cost more than all the money the banana man ever had in all his life!

After a time the boy in velvet suggested taking off his shoes, like the other. The Alley boy never before had seen such white legs, and was much disgusted when his companion confessed the stones hurt his feet — but just the littlest bit!

The Alley boy showed the other how to squeeze the mud up between his toes, and how to pick up pebbles with his big toe, curling it under. Then the two grew quite friendly, and had a most glorious mud battle.

How that battle would have come out it is hard to say. At the critical moment the

invader's English nurse came around the corner of the Avenue, waving affectionate farewells to a policeman. When she beheld the boy in velvet she held up her hands and screamed. In a second she had seized him and jerked him viciously on to the sidewalk.

"'Eaven 'elp us!" she cried, as she gazed on him with despair. She shook him vigorously, after looking to see that no one was in sight, and gathered up his mud-stained things, roundly abusing the owner of the puddle as a pug-nosed brat of a thieving street-arab. The street-arab stood in calm indifference, letting the soft mud ooze up between his toes as he watched the tears gathering in the other boy's eyes. The nurse seized her charge and with a contemptuous sniff at the indifferent child in the puddle led the other boy homeward, asking 'eaven to 'elp 'er each time she looked down at his clothes.

As the boy in velvet was jerked bodily along, he gazed back longingly at the mud-puddle and the ship with three masts. Why

could n't he do that sort of thing, too? Why were all the good things of life denied him? Why could n't he play in that beautiful black mud, as well as the other boy?

He looked back regretfully at the multi-millionaire, who was still letting the soft slime ooze deliciously between his toes. But the strong arm of that irate nurse hauled him relentlessly on. He tugged to get away, but in vain, and as he was dragged homeward up the Avenue his lusty bawling echoed up and down that decorous street, and filled the inmost heart of his English nurse with a secret desire to spank him.

It was two whole weeks before the boy in velvet appeared on the scene again. When he walked slowly down the Avenue his face was quite as white as the lace on his velvet collar, and there was a big swathe of flannel about his throat. The nurse held his hand, for his legs were still very wobbly.

The boy from the Alley was there with his shingle, choo-choo-chooing gaily up and down the puddle.

"I 've been thick!" said the boy in velvet, in a weak and doleful voice.

"Was you?" said the owner of the puddle, indifferently. That seemed an enviable distinction to the Alley boy. He thought it was uttered in the form of a challenge. So with a show of infinite pride he stooped to fix his vessel's bowsprit.

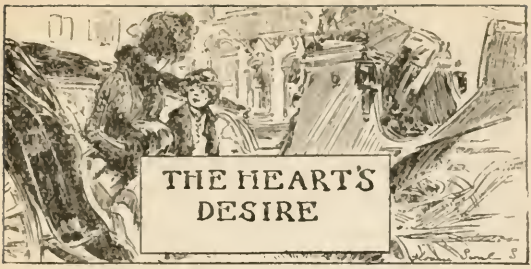
"Yeth, I 've been dreffully, dreffully thick," wailed the boy in velvet, gazing with hungry eyes on the shingle boat, the mud, and the water.

"Yes, he 'as, you little pug-nosed himp of filth, and it was you as done it!" cried the red-faced nurse. "Whitney Algernon 'Olland, you come 'ere. Don't you dare to talk to the likes of 'im. 'E ain't fit comp'ny for you! 'E 's only a dirty little thievin' street-arab, and it was 'im as nearly killed you. Come along, Whitney Algernon 'Olland, or nurse 'll go straight 'ome and tell your mamma!"

She cast a withering look on the owner of the puddle, seized the boy in velvet, and dragged him off. The boy in velvet did not

and could not understand how she ever could make such a mistake. As she led him relentlessly up the Avenue he wept copiously. But the owner of the puddle choo-choo-chooed up and down his domain of mud with calm, supreme, imperturbable indifference!

But I watch th' 'igh-toned nobs go out
W'ere th' English liner lays;
An' s' elp me Gawd, but 'er Union Jack
Fills m' bally eyes with 'aze!



THERE were many things to show that Teddie's arrival in this world was an unwelcome event. The first symptom of such feeling was the fact that three days after his birth his mother drank half a bottle of carbolic acid, and was found dying on the very bed where Teddie lay wailing for his breakfast.

This took place in the big brown-stone hotel that overlooked the Plaza, and to show that there were others who regarded Teddie's advent in the light of an intrusion, the diamond-studded manager of that particular hotel walked up and down saying it was a pretty kettle of fish, and that his house would be ruined, and that if a newspaper reporter even so much as showed his face in that hotel to kick him out.

The worst of it all was that not a scrap of letter or paper or personal property could be found to show just who "Mrs. James Brown" really was. Even the name and initials had been cut out of the dead woman's underclothing — and it was noticed at the time that they were of the very finest silk! — and the wearer of the diamond studs was in a terrible way, not so much because the infant would have to be handed over to the tender mercies of the police and the city Foundling Hospital, but because of the fact that if such a thing were done the whole story would, of course, get into the papers.

So when the Irish elevator man, not altogether from selfish interests, said that he would take the baby, for a consideration, Teddie was joyfully handed over to him, accompanied by two nice crisp ten-dollar bills. This same Irish elevator man straightway carried Teddie to his little home on Thompson Street, where for seven months his childless wife lovingly over-fed him. Then it so fell out that she had to make room for a little boy of her own. Teddie

was passed on to an equally humble home on Sullivan Street, and was accordingly thereafter known as Teddie Sullivan.

But in his new home the sturdy Teddie's appetite developed the most unexpected proportions, and he was quickly shuffled out into the wide world, where he fell upon evil days and would surely have died, had not a kindly-eyed Scotch widow in Perkins Place taken him in. His new foster-mother, who was laundress and shirt-maker and housekeeper by turns, had seen better days. But as her pursuits were now often those of mendicity she found the hungry-eyed Teddie to be a potent accession, and the gratuities he called forth were numerous. As Mar'gut Macdougall's love for Glenlevit rye, however, was even stronger than her love for the child, there were many days, indeed, when Master Teddie went without his dinner.

But here it was that Teddie emerged from babyhood and learned to say his first words with a strange little touch of the Highland burr to them. In time, too, he grew big enough to explore the boundless vistas

of Perkins Place, which had no less than twelve tumble-down tenement houses facing on it. But nothing is so proudly exclusive as a slum like Perkins Place, and as it was an open secret that Teddie's forebears were unknown, he found no one to play with, and from the first day of his appearance on the Place repeatedly had flung at him an epithet which he, happily, did not understand. In more generous moments they merely made fun of his yellow curls, and called him "Girlie!"

His loneliness, however, did not weigh heavily upon him. He held animated discourse with bits of broken flower-pots, and fell into the habit of telling wonderful stories to the third step in the landing, which had a crack in it, and therefore always listened best. Later on he invented a series of games, in which the pieces of sticks were all men and the stones all tigers. If the tigers knocked over the men first throw, that meant they were all eaten up. But if the men fell down across one another, that meant the tigers could n't touch them, and the tigers

had to begin all over again and keep eating up until the men were all gone. Tigers, in fact, from the first day Teddie overheard Bud Persons expatiating on their ferocity, had a peculiar fascination for him; only sometimes they invaded his dreams by night and made him wake with feelings of unutterable terror.

The child, as he grew older, also took a strange delight in watching people pass up and down the Place. He would suppose with himself that some Great Power had ordained that if a man did not pass before he had taken twenty breaths he would have to drop down dead. By the hour he would patiently sit and test this supposition, glorying over each victory and depressed by each defeat.

Then he took passionately to papers, books, and pictures. He came across a number of old "Illustrated News," with pictures of the siege of Paris, and over these pictures of war and adventure he would pore by the hour. He had refused to go to the Night School, and could not read, but he

made up stories for each illustration, and it was not until the pages were worn to shreds and tatters that he found it possible to forego this pleasure.

Then he grew more adventurous in spirit and stole beyond the borders of the Place into unknown country, and even ventured so far away as Washington Square. It was here that life really opened up for him, for it was while following after an Italian organ-grinder that he came upon the Avenue with its smooth pavement, its hurrying carriages, and its long vista of white-globed lamp-posts leading afar off into the mysteriously alluring Unknown.

From the first, that Unknown Country enchanted the child. Just why it was he did not know, and never could tell, but day by day he stole away from the gloom and smells of Perkins Place and trudged off to the Avenue, where he could go wandering inquisitively up and down, watching the horses, the hurdygurdies, the big houses, and the children who were so different from his neighbours on Perkins Place. In time,

when he had explored all the lower end of his street of enchantment, he found it possible, by climbing on the backs of up-bound carriages, to reach the remoter parts of the asphalted street, going sometimes even so far as the Park, where it seemed that miles and miles of green and growing things stretched away into the distance.

But he liked best of all to stand on the crowded sidewalk and listen to the women with silk skirts rustling by, to smell the perfume, and to hear the clank of the chains on the carriage horses as they came champing up to the stone steps. He liked to stand and get whiffs of music from the houses and to see the beautiful beings all clad in glittering things going in and out. He had a weakness, too, for bright colours and flowers, and the glimmer of the gilt furniture through some of the big hotel windows filled him with a nameless hunger. They certainly did not have that sort of thing down at Perkins Place, and as the time went on he even grew to think of his home with a certain disdain. His love for the odorous livery

stable which, with its stamping horses and tall hansoms and men who were always washing down big carriages, had once seemed a sort of paradise to him, waned and finally flickered out in his affections. He forgot, too, the undertaker's window with the little satin-draped coffin in it, before which he used to stand by the hour with wondering eyes. And when he had once climbed up the wide stone steps and peeked timidly into the Cathedral, dark, vast, silent and mysterious, he no longer sat opposite the little Sullivan Street Church and wondered why people walked up through its door, always in their best clothes, and with cold, set faces.

So Teddie Sullivan became a sort of Buccaneer on the city's high seas of beauty, and went cruising up and down the Avenue in search of all those sounds and sights in which he took such an incongruous delight. There seemed to be a taint of aristocracy in his slum blood. At many an afternoon reception he was an uninvited guest, and quite often sat on the railing outside and dined, in fancy, at the different restaurants where he saw the

"swell guys" go. In time he even grew to be fastidious, for where he could not see carriages and horses and hear music he would not deign to attend.

But as summer came on he found these grew less and less frequent, so one warm afternoon when he found forty broughams blocking the Avenue and a strip of red carpet covering the pavement, he knew that the season was not yet altogether over.

A couple of policemen guarded the gateway and two footmen stood on the wide stone steps beside the open doors. The low buzz of talk and an occasional strain of music came from the big cool-looking house. It was a wonderful scene to Teddie, who wormed his way up toward the policemen and stood by the great stone gate-pillars, with his freckled nose thrust through the iron rods of the fence, watching the shifting panorama with wistful and unwearying eyes.

As the afternoon slipped away the crowd began to come out from the house. Three times did one of the fat policemen, who kept guard at the gateway, pull the child away by

the scruff of the neck of his ragged little coat, but each time the intruder had edged persistently back. Now that the guests were coming from the house the fat policeman did not care to keep up the undignified combat, so Teddie remained.

Many of the figures that stepped past were familiar to him. Among the last persons to come away was the short man with the white whiskers, who always wore the gold cross on his coat, and then the tall, white-faced woman who always rustled louder than all the others, and of whom the child was more or less afraid. Teddie remembered them all. Then a man with a long black coat and boots that shone very funnily came down the steps walking with a girl in white, with lilac-blossoms and lorgnettes. Teddie had not seen the tall girl in white go in. She was a new one! She must have come before he did.

The freckled nose squeezed further in between the iron bars. It was like finding a new friend, or discovering a new world, and his eyes drank in every detail.

She was the best one yet. Her dress was the whitest dress he had ever seen. Her hair was brown, and her eyes were grey — grey and soft and kind. It was no wonder he felt a new and strange feeling run through his puny little body. Then and there he tumbled head over heels in love, although he did not know it. She made his heart thump as only the band and the war pictures of the Siege of Paris and dreams of Santa Claus had hitherto done. He guessed she was the fairy that Bud Persons' Sunday-school teacher used to talk about. On further thoughts he decided she must be the Angel in the old "Harper's Magazine" that Mar'gut MacDougall would let him look through only on Sundays. Yes, that was it. She was the Angel.

The young man with the black coat pointed out the little freckled face with his walking stick. They both laughed.

"What an excruciatingly dirty little devil!" said the man.

The girl looked at the child for a moment, and then came over to him.

"What is your name, my little man?" she asked.

Teddie was silent. He could not have spoken for every house on the Avenue. His tongue clove to the roof of his mouth and he flushed crimson. Then the Angel (he was *sure* she was the Angel now) stooped down — actually leaned down over him until he could smell her flowers. He fixed his eyes blankly on them. He wriggled his bare toes in the anguish of his embarrassment.

"I — er— really —er — would n't touch him, you know!" advised the man in the black coat. How the child loathed the man in the black coat and shiny boots!

The Angel only smiled. "Did I frighten you, dear?" she asked gently.

The bare toes wriggled in mute embarrassment. So the Angel sighed, took out one of her flowers and gave it to him, and said to the man, as she turned to the carriage, that there was something fine in that child's face. Teddie heard it, and would have gone through fire and water for her.

Before following her the young man in

the black coat diplomatically dropped a quarter into the youngster's hand. Teddie was thinking of other things, and never knew it. The last words of the Angel went singing through his veins. He did not see the fatal quarter until the carriage rolled out of sight far down the Avenue. When he beheld the coin, and realised what had been done, his flush was even deeper than before. He inwardly cursed the man in the black coat. She would think he was a beggar. He was disgraced in the Angel's eyes.

When he got back to Perkins Place he secretly dug a hole, three feet deep, and in the bottom of that hole he put the accursed quarter. On it he piled seven brickbats and flung four old boots and three empty tomato cans. Then he shovelled in stones and earth, stamping it all down savagely and vindictively.

The flower he placed in an empty castor-oil bottle, and watered it for days with infinite care.

For the rest of that week his mind was troubled with strange things. When Sniffins

came and kicked him, he did not even try to kick him back; which conduct made Sniffins ask if he was sick.

A perceptible change crept over Teddie. His life had flowered into its first love. Night after night he dreamed of Angels with grey eyes and lorgnettes, and sometimes of a man in a long black coat. The tails of this coat in the dream would always grow longer and longer and thinner and thinner, until the man turned into the Evil One and crawled hungrily up and down Perkins Place on all fours, looking for something he could never seem to find.

By day Teddie trudged up and down the Avenue like one in a dream, watching out always for one particular carriage. Whenever this one carriage bowled past him, an intoxicating tingling fear seized on his limbs, and left him staring blankly after it from the curb.

But no sign could he ever get from the Angel as she swept by. Once he even grew so bold as to climb up behind her victoria, intending to show his face over the back

and speak to her. But a sudden terrible embarrassment seized him before he could do this, and in his new sense of shame and dread he slipped down and dodged away among the stream of hurrying carriages.

He grew content merely to watch her from the sidewalk, probably much the same as Ferdinand once watched his window in the Florentine Riccardi.

So when Mar'gut MacDougall, without previous warning, confronted him with a new pair of pants and declared he was growing up an idle young ignoramus, and that on the next morning he should start to school, his heart sank like lead and he knew that he and the Angel should see each other no more. He said nothing, but slipped quietly out of the house and made his way up the Avenue, with a new fire in his childish eyes and a mad despair gnawing at his heart.

The hours slipped away, but he waited and waited, resolved that this last time he must and should speak to her.

It was late in the afternoon before the waiting child caught sight of her as she

passed up the crowded thoroughfare without so much as seeing him. He watched the carriage fade away up the Avenue, swallowed up by the stream that surged about it. A sickening sense of loneliness and desertion overcame him, and a sudden gush of tears welled to his eyes.

There was still a chance that she would come back again, but he knew the Angel had forgotten him. For the first time in his childish life, waiting there at the curb for the Woman He Loved, he felt the wordless soul-hunger of loneliness.

She did at last come back. It was almost dusk when the child again caught sight of her carriage sweeping back down the Avenue. She sat back in the deep seat, seeing nothing and looking far into the distance.

Teddie, in a mad sort of despair, waved at her and then called out to her. But she neither saw nor heard.

Then a sudden thought, intoxicating as wine, ran through the child's mind. The thought that he should lose her for all time made life itself a trivial thing.

He watched his chance, dodged out among the hurrying carriages and hansoms, and deliberately flung himself in front of one bay team. He shut his eyes and waited.

Davis, the coachman, had been brought over from London, and Davis knew his business. He cursed with a good British oath, and brought the two bays around in a sharp semicircle that swung the right-hand wheels completely off the ground. They missed the boy by three inches. Davis was on the point of cutting at him with the long coach whip, when he caught the girl's eye. The Angel remembered him.

"Davis, help that little boy into the carriage, please," she said quietly.

The scandalised Davis got down and did so.

"Now we 'll drive this little boy to his home, Davis, if you please."

The child was mute, limp, and miserable. He almost wished he was dead, for a moment, until the delicious consciousness that he was near her fully dawned on him.

The Angel took him on her knee and

looked for several minutes into his blue eyes. Then she asked him, point-blank, why he had done such a thing. The child, who was known throughout Perkins Place to be an ingenious, inveterate, and incorrigible liar, broke down, and weeping repentantly, wished he really was dead, and in the performance completely ruined the Angel's white shirt-waist. But the Angel was all patience, and between sobs and whimpers he told her the whole story of his love for her. He talked as he had never talked before, and when he had nothing left to say he sighed and looked at her and sighed again. He was happy.

He touched her with his brown little fingers.

"My, I like bein' near youse!" he said. "It's like th' hurdygurdy! I allus want 'er git right close up to it an' see where th' soun' kind 'er first comes frum. Youse is jus' like that! An' I can't help it, youse is so — so much like music! I guess I 'd ravver listen to youse then th' music, tho'."

His arms slipped timidly up to her neck,

where he let them rest with intuitive tenderness.

It was the strangest love confession ever made to her. But it was a love confession. And she was a woman.

She slipped her own arms around the child and drew him close to her. There had been some one else, once, who had made the same confession. And now there came a dozen every season, yet that one, the real one, seemed very long ago, and it had been very hard work to keep from getting lonely.

But the sniffing Davis had pulled up with a jerk at Perkins Alley. The woman sighed, and the child's face lost its light.

"Won't you kiss me good-bye before you go, dear?" said the Angel.

Some old portal of memory swung back and Teddy kissed the girl on her eyes, as some one long ago — he could not remember who — used to kiss him.

"Yer eyes is orfully salty tastin'," said the child.

The girl did not answer. She was thinking how *He* had said to her once, long ago:

"See, dearest, I shall kiss away every salt tear, and we shall be happy!"

"Home, m'm?" said Davis for the fourth time.

"Yes," said the girl absent-mindedly.

. . . . . .

Teddie stood in the gathering dusk, listening to the sound of the wheels dying away in the distance. He drew a deep breath. With that breath he took into his childish nostrils all the blended, heavy odours of Perkins Place. Never before did the awful hideouness of it all so seem to hem him in, and crush him down to some darker under-world.

NOT IN UTTER NAKEDNESS

Ages ago it seems to us,
O April, ere our birth, —
Ages ago it must have been,
Upon some other earth
We knew Thee, when without regret
Those happier hills we trod
When by a star or two thy feet
And ours walked nearer God.

IT was a warm, showery April day, with little patches of sunlight every now and then.

The Home faced the Square, and in the Square were many trees, and in the trees were many sparrows — thousands of them, it seemed, and all of them trying to say that Spring had come. There was also a robin or two fluting away in their mellower contralto among the tall elms.

The air was so soft, and it smelt so much like Spring, that the Doctor, as he turned to go out, told the Nurse that there was no reason why the windows might not be opened and the boy let sit up for a while.

So the Nurse wheeled the little white bed over beside the window and opened the sash. Then she made a sort of nest of the pillows

and blanket, and lifted the boy up into it. This she did with a quiet alacrity, for she was used to such things.

"I tell you, young man, those are pretty thin legs of yours!" she said, not unkindly, as she tucked him in for she liked the child.

The boy smiled weakly, but did not answer. Then the nurse gave him his milk, with lime-water in it, and brushed his scant yellow hair while he drank it. When he had finished she took the glass, gave a little touch to one of the pillows, and hurried away, for she had thirty other sick children to attend that morning.

Bliss — from the day he was born they had called him Bliss — sat quite still, watching the sun slip on and on through soft grey clouds with mother-of-pearl edges. Then, all of a sudden, it came out full and dazzling and golden, and lay in a patch of glaring yellow across his bed. He could feel it soaking in through the blankets. The feeling was new to him, and it ran up through his thin legs like wine.

On the maple outside two or three sparrows were twittering and chirping away as if they could never say all the good things they had to talk about. Further up the Square a hurdygurdy began to play. The strong sunlight had made Bliss' eyes droop, but at the sound of the hurdygurdy he suddenly opened them. He could not hear very much of the music, though he strained his ears painfully to catch the sounds. He, indeed, had never thought hurdygurdies could make such beautiful music. While he sat listening the Nurse softly opened the door and glanced in. She saw the quiet smile on the child's lips, and closed the door again, without speaking.

Then the hurdygurdy moved closer down the Square and began to play once more. This time he could hear it quite plainly. It mixed with the twittering of the sparrows and the calls of the robins in the elms. The smell of the buds came with it, too, and the dust that danced up and down so busily in the square of golden sunlight falling across the bed seemed a part of it.

How funny it all seemed, thought Bliss; how funny and familiar and old.

He said to himself that he felt as if he had sat there for years and years and years, and watched the same trees, and listened to the same birds, and heard the same hurdy-gurdy. No; it had not been years, but thousands and thousands of years. It sounded so old, and familiar, and reminiscent.

And the sunlight on the bed — he wondered where it could have been that he used to sit and watch the dust going up and down just the same as it was doing here. He sniffed the air lazily. It smelt very nice, with the perfume of the trees and some sort of blossoms that he could not see.

The breeze that blew in at the window in little gusts swayed the white curtain and made the warm patch of sunlight on the bed shrink up, and then grow bigger again. The hurdygurdy went away, and the birds seemed to stop for a while, and only a street cry or two came up from the Square. Bliss believed that he liked the quiet the best. It seemed as if the World had turned over, and

then gone to sleep again. Something within him, some voice he had never felt before, seemed to be groping its way blindly up from his heart, and trying to express itself. He wanted to say something — to sing it — but he could find no words that would fit. He felt suddenly as if he had wings, and that he could drift airily up and down in blue ether far above the earth. He was so happy he felt that he must sing as nobody had ever sung in all the world before. But he could find no lines for the song, and only stretched his thin arms out helplessly into the warm patch of yellow sunlight.

Then a sudden terrible, mysterious loneliness stole over him. It seemed as if he had been alone all his life, and that everything was grey around him, and that the silence was so beautiful that he dare not speak to break it. He wondered if he could tell it all to the Nurse, and if she would understand. Then he knew she would n't, because he would not know how to begin, and it was one of those things Other People never understood. But the birds were singing again

outside, and away up the Square another hurdygurdy had begun to play, and the blind was flapping lazily to and fro and letting the warm sunlight stream over him. It was all so poignantly lovely! The world was so strangely beautiful! Life was so unspeakably sweet!

The Nurse came in on tiptoe, for she had expected he would be asleep.

She slipped a clinic thermometer under his tongue, and sat on the bed looking into his eyes.

"How 's temperature?" asked the Doctor, showing his head at the door.

"It 's up two points," said the nurse, impassively.

"H 'm! Then tell Simpson not to mind about the operating table. Friday will be soon enough."

The nurse looked at the child and sighed. Bliss was gazing far out over the tree tops at the blue sky. He reached out his hand to take the Nurse's.

Without a moment's warning a torrent of sudden tears burst from his eyes, and his body shook with a passionate sob.

"Why, Bliss, what is it, dear?" asked the Nurse, for never before had the boy been known to do such a thing.

"I — I — don't know what it is! I — I am so happy, and it is all so funny — but you can't understand, Nurse. It's inside here," said the boy, putting his gaunt little hand over his heart and letting the tears rain down his cheeks unchecked, "an' if I tried all my life I could never tell you, Nurse. No, never!"

. . . . . .

"But how is it," asked the Young Artist, as he walked arm-in-arm across the Square with the Great Man, — "how is it you have done so much, in one lifetime?"

The Great Man looked up at the tall old trees. The smell of Spring was very sweet in the air.

"It has not been much," he said. "And it is such a simple old story. A great deal of loneliness; a great deal of hard work; a little luck, perhaps; much misery; a little love; a few enemies, and a friend or two! But after all, it has not been much. As you grow older you will find that the

work you want to do is the work you can never do. It is the elusive, the fugitive, the intangible idea that you will grope after so blindly, and yet so passionately. And yet you will never quite capture it. The spirit of it will steal over you at times, at rare moments, but it will be more a pain than a pleasure to you. You will feel it within you, and the greater you are the more you will feel it, and though you try and try all your life long to utter it, you cannot and you could not do it. No, never!"